■ ACROSS/A16

RP gov't, MILF negotiators say peace is near

■ BUSINESS/B1

P20B of PLDT value wiped out; execs puzzled by steep drop in a day

■ NEWS/A2

Palace, Senate on collision course over EO 464, budget

■ LIFESTYLE/C2

List for lovers: Where to go for wine and roses and cooking up romance

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, February 9, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 63 Pl[illegible]e: www.inq7.net

More woes for Lafayette surface in House hearing

By Michael Lim Ubac

MORE WOES FOR LAFAYETTE PHILIPPINES INC. (LPI) whose mine on Rapu-Rapu Island in Albay figured in two toxic spills last year.

The House committee on natural resources yesterday claimed to have discovered that the company was wholly owned by an Australian-Malaysian consortium, in violation of the 60-40 capitalization requirement in favor of Filipinos.

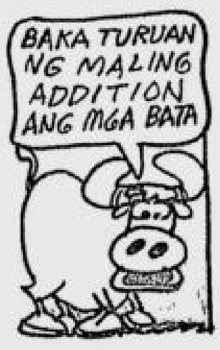
MORE/ A4

GMA no teachers' pet

THE "TEACHER ACT" that President Macapagal-Arroyo pulled off the other day at a public elementary school did not sit well with militant teachers and students who said she was imparting the wrong values.

"What values will our schoolchildren learn from

GMA/ A7


BAKA TURUAN NG MALING ADDITION ANG MGA BATA

Pacquiao, SMC sign mega contract

JOAN BONDOC

LIMELIGHT BURNS: At the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, Joanna Rose Bacosa is the center of media attention as she files a criminal complaint against her former lover.

By Marc Anthony Reyes
and Daxim Lucas

HE DODGED QUESTIONS ABOUT a love child with the same quickness and finesse he does punches thrown at him inside the ring.

"Let's just stick to boxing," said world boxing icon Manny Pacquiao during a press conference yesterday announcing his multimillion-peso record-breaking endorsement deal with food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

The arrangement with the "People's Champ" would make Pacquiao the biggest endorser of SMC products, surpassing the late actor Fernando Poe Jr., the record holder.

PACQUIAO/ A7

SAN MIG CORPORATION
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BOTTOMS UP: "One-of-a-kind-deal," San Miguel Corp. describes its "lifetime partnership" with Manny Pacquiao. SMC president/CEO Ramon Ang toasts the Pacman.

Prober says sorry, but...

Corpus stands by his 'animal' remarks as 'it is the truth'

By Norman Bordadora,
Christine O. Avendaño,
and Armand N. Nocum

INTERIOR UNDERSECRETARY Marius Corpus yesterday said first-hand accounts of the conditions of the people who tried to get into the first-anniversary show of ABS-CBN's "Wowowee" were the basis of his earlier remark that they were "manipulated and treated like animals."

In an interview with ABS-CBN's dzMM radio, Corpus stood by his remark but denied that he had meant to put the network or any of its executives in a bad light.

He made the remark during a press conference called on Tuesday to present the report of the inter-agency Task Force Ultra, which he chairs, on the Feb. 4 stampede that killed 74 people and injured hundreds of others.

"It was not my intention to malign [ABS-CBN chair and chief executive officer Eugenio Lopez

PROBER/ A6

LYN RILLON

ORPHANED of their mother Nita Balibalita, siblings Jenny, Jane and Renz Balibalita have received P10,000 in assistance from ABS-CBN.

LAST TWO PATIENTS at the Rizal Medical Center in Pasig City: One of them is Emelia Dy who suffered a broken hip.

ABS-CBN questions credibility of task force

By DJ Yap
and Luige A. del Puerto

ABS-CBN YESTERDAY QUESTIONED the credibility of Task Force Ultra and rejected its findings that blamed the organizers of "Wowowee" for the Feb. 4 stampede.

The broadcast giant sought an investigation free of "conflict of interest," saying the task force had members who were "involved in the event"—an apparent reference to the Pasig City government and police.

It also said that instead of coming up with facts, the fact-finding team only delivered what it later admitted to be its personal opinion that ABS-CBN had "exploited, manipulated and treated its viewers like animals."

"If those are what they call facts, then we ... believe there is little hope of getting the truth. Not from Task Force Ultra,'

ABS-CBN/ A6

MARLON RAMOS/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

STILL POOR but alive and well, Susan Presbitero is back home in Laguna with her 10 children.

Feminine face of poverty: Only 3 men died at Ultra

By Volt Contreras
and Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

THE OFFICIAL DEATH TOLL IS 74—BUT ADD one more as an unborn child is now dead as a consequence of Saturday's "Wowowee" tragedy.

A pregnant woman among the hundreds who emerged bruised and battered from the stampede at the PhilSport Arena, previously Ultra, was forced to have an abortion on Monday night at a government hospital, the INQUIRER learned yesterday.

The woman, 37, was treated for an injured foot when first brought to the Rizal Medical Center in Pasig City and was discharged hours later, according to RMC social worker Elenita Maraya.

She was in pain when brought back to the RMC on Sunday and was allowed to go home again after a checkup. By Monday, though, she returned because of "continuous bleeding" and was finally admitted for an abortion to save her life, Maraya said in an interview.

A resident of Sitio Malay, Cainta, Rizal, the mother of four and wife of a construction worker lost a 4-month-old fetus, Maraya said. The patient was discharged at around 2:30 p.m. yester-

FEMININE/ A6

Cruel boss shatters Filipino maid's dream

SINGAPORE—CHONA HAD LONG dreamed of this day.

On her parents' small farm in the lush Cagayan Valley of northern Luzon, she had imagined traveling to a place like Hong Kong or Singapore.

And now, in April 2005, she had done it. Here she was in Singapore to begin a new phase of her life, working as a maid.

"I thought Singapore was a very nice place because I could see all the trees and it was very clean ... I'm happy because now my dream has come true, I said to myself," Chona recalls.

But her dream job rapidly turned into a nightmare—one that bears a striking resemblance to the experiences of many other maids documented last year by New York-based Human Rights Watch in a report on Singapore's domestic helpers.

Based on in-depth interviews with 65 maids of various nationalities, the rights watchdog said Singapore's maids suffer abuses including physical and verbal aggression, threats, restrictions on movement, abuse by agents, exorbitant debt payments, long work hours and lack of rest days.

Singapore's Ministry of Manpower called the report a gross exaggeration.

But Chona says she suffered all of it.

Trouble began the moment Chona—not her real name—met her Singaporean agent after being driven into the city from Changi Airport. The contract she had signed with an employment agency in Manila promised a salary of S$350 ($215) and at least two days off every month, she says.

But the Singapore maid agency told her the salary would be S$320 with no days off—for two

CRUEL/ A4

Fil-Am eyes RP designer for Oscars

By Ruben Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—"ARE THERE ANY FILipino designers out there who would be interested in outfitting me?"

This was the answer of Pia Clemente—the first Filipino-American woman to receive an Oscar nomination in the 78-history of the Academy Awards—when the INQUIRER asked the inevitable Hollywood awards season question, "Who will you be wearing?"

That is, on the red carpet at the Kodak Theatre on March 5. Clemente added, laughing, "That is the No. 1 question I get asked!"

She revealed, "I will start working with a stylist next week. It would be nice to find a Filipino designer."

FIL-AM/ A4

JANET SUSAN NEPALES

ABOUT TIME: Pia Clemente at a press showing is thrilled that her movie "Our Time Is Up" starring Kevin Pollack is nominated for the Oscars in the Best Short Film, Live Action category.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol, Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. There will be frequent rains over the Eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao. The rest of Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers. SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/02/09/06

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Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Rains

Palace, Senate on collision course

By TJ Burgonio

THE CONTROVERSIAL EXECUTIVE Order 464, barring Executive Branch officials from appearing in congressional hearings, has become a source of friction yet again between Malacañang and the Senate.

Invoking the EO, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye and officials of the Department of Interior and Local Governments yesterday avoided the hearings on their 2006 budgets by the Senate committee of the whole, deftly outmaneuvering the senators who were out to grill them on issues outside of the budget.

The annoyed senators warned that this would mean that the Senate would decide on their budgets without hearing their side and might then approve a P1 allocation for them.

But senators suspect this is not something that worries the Palace officials.

They believe the officials' refusal to defend their budgets indicated that the administration wanted the 2005 budget reenacted.

"I have a strong suspicion that they want the 2005 budget reenacted. And this is not good for the country," said Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the finance committee.

Villar said his suspicion was bolstered by the passage by the House of a P13.1-billion supplemental budget granting government workers a P1,000 monthly allowance.

"Where can you find a situation where the supplemental budget comes first before the main budget? Normally, the supplemental budget is an addition to the main budget. If they want to increase the pay of government employees, they should just pass the budget," he said.

SNUBBED: Senator Villar shows "excuse letters" of invited officials.

Bunye and Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus sent letters to Villar, saying they regretted not being able to attend the hearings "for lack of clearance under EO 464."

This is the first time that Palace executives have invoked the order—preventing administration, police and military officials from appearing in congressional hearings without the President's consent—to avoid the budget hearings.

It was previously invoked by officials to avoid the congressional inquiries into the "Hello Garci" tape scandal, the P728-million fertilizer fund scam and the controversial NorthRail project.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Palace lawyers had advised the officials to take this action because the Supreme Court was set to begin oral arguments next week on petitions questioning the EO's legality.

Administration Sen. Joker Arroyo said the snub has only escalated the conflict between Malacañang and the Senate over EO 464.

"There's now hostility between the Executive and the Senate, and as the days go on, that kind of hostility is not abated, it's intensified, and that's not good for the government," Arroyo said.

Both sides "should make a move to settle this," he said.

Sen. Manuel Roxas said the move showed a lack of sensitivity on the part of the Executive Branch.

"The budget hearings in the Senate are not driven by petty politics but by our own sober response to the call of the times for transparency, public accountability and constructive political engagement," he said.

Asked if the officials' absence would translate into a zero budget for their departments, Villar said: "No, maybe a P1 budget."

Cory-Erap alliance doomed, solons say

By Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio

KEY POLITICAL ALLIES OF President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday downplayed the brewing political alliance between the camps of former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Joseph Estrada, saying it would be short-lived.

Nationalist People's Coalition Rep. Douglas Cagas (Davao del Sur) described it as an "unholy alliance of has-beens," while Lakas-CMD Rep. Edwin Uy (Isabela) said it's "doomed to fail."

On Sunday, Aquino and key opposition leaders attended a thanksgiving Mass at the San Juan Medical Center for Estrada's successful eye surgery. Later, the two met behind closed doors, fueling speculations of an emerging alliance between the previously opposing political camps.

It was the first meeting between Aquino and Estrada since the latter was ousted by a military-backed people's revolt in January 2001 where Aquino played a major role.

Cagas said the alliance would be "superficial because both of them cannot possibly accept each other wholeheartedly because of difference in principles and agenda."

Laughing stock

"Ms Aquino will end up a laughing stock if she will join the camp of Estrada whose ouster she actively supported in 2001 because she could not stomach his corrupt leadership," said the lawmaker.

But Aquino has left open the possibility of a political alliance with Estrada to end the current political crisis. "I'm not ruling out anything," she said.

Yesterday, Estrada indicated anew that he was open to an alliance with Aquino.

Estrada said his Sunday meeting with Aquino, actress Susan Roces and Senate President Franklin Drilon at the San Juan Medical Center was a sign of a "widening alliance" of opposition leaders.

"Their presence was more than reassuring that there will always be a wide alliance in working for the welfare of our people and for the future of our nation," he said in a statement read for him by son Sen. Jinggoy Estrada.

"Our camp is open to any alliance in working for the welfare of our people," the young Estrada said in a briefing, echoing his father's statement.

Jinggoy said the Sunday meeting was a "good start" for future meetings, and voiced hopes the two former Presidents would meet again to discuss the framework of alliance as well as solutions to the country's problems.

Good sign

Former Sen. Vicente Sotto III, who is identified with the Estrada camp, said the meeting was a good sign that there was still chance for opposition leaders to be "united."

But Uy said an Estrada-Aquino alliance was doomed because its sole objective was to push the political and personal interests of the two ex-presidents.

"They will just use each other ... because Erap is hoping to go back to Malacañang while Cory wants to save their family's Hacienda Luisita," said Cagas who said it was clear that Aquino wanted to install Senate President Franklin Drilon as President so he could protect her families' wealth.

In view of the upcoming 20th anniversary of the 1986 people's revolt, Estrada said he was joining Aquino's call for "our people to renew and harness the spirit of People Power that is within each one of us, in helping our people help themselves to improve their living conditions."

If there's a will: Nick sends letter to Candy

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

IF THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY, SO THE saying goes, and jailed Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon proved that yesterday.

He managed to slip a note past his military guards to military prosecutor Capt. Candelaria Rivas after failing to communicate with her since they were arrested together last Jan. 27, his lawyers said.

The alleged Oakwood mutiny leader asked his lawyers to deliver a hastily written letter to Rivas after a preliminary investigation hearing held at the headquarters of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"Candy," wrote Faeldon, addressing the military prosecutor by her nickname. "It is important for us to have a common lawyer. I want Atty. [Gideon] Mortel and [Gener] Gito to be our common lawyer. Your existing lawyer can also be one."

He signed the note "Nick."

Mortel said Faeldon, in handcuffs, hurriedly scribbled the note after Col. Henry Galarpe, the provost marshal officer conducting the hearing, left the room. Faeldon also handed his lawyers two previously prepared letters – one to his sister and the other, an "open letter" which the lawyers said they would reveal later.

Mortel and Gito said they tried to deliver the letter to Rivas at the Headquarters Support Command office where she is now detained. But they were barred from seeing the woman so they passed on the letter to Rivas' sister.

Rivas was with Faeldon when he was captured 44 days after he escaped from military custody. The two are now being investigated by the AFP Provost Marshal's Office for possible court-martial charges.

Military officials said the two had developed an unlikely romantic relationship late last year. Both have denied this although Rivas has declared support for Faeldon's call for reforms in government.

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Yuchengco fights for PLDT shares declared 'ill-gotten'

By Armand N. Nocum

BUSINESSMAN ALFONSO YUCHENGCO IS pursuing his claim to a P21-billion block of shares in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company which the Supreme Court recently declared as "ill-gotten wealth" and forfeited to the Philippine government.

In a motion asking the court to reconsider that ruling, Yuchengco said he should have been given a chance to present evidence before the Sandiganbayan which originally tried the case.

Yuchengco was involved in a four-way dispute over the contested PLDT shares, which amount to about 6.4 percent of the telephone company's capital stock. The other claimants where the Presidential Commission on Good Government, the family of the late tycoon Ramon Cojuangco, and the heirs of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Yuchengco charged that the Sandiganbayan had sat on his amended complaint for five years and had deliberately delayed the resolution of related petitions.

He said his lawyers moved for a postponement of the trial only once while the other parties, including the Cojuangco group and the PCGG asked for postponement several times and were allowed to present additional evidence.

"Given this unusual backdrop of (my) intervention, it is respectfully submitted that respondent court, with grave abuse of discretion, precipitately declared (that I) have waived (my) right to present evidence contrary to the Honorable Supreme Court's teaching that the desideratum of a speedy disposition of cases should not, if at all possible, result in the precipitate loss of a party's right to present evidence," Yuchengco said.

The Sandiganbayan had dismissed the PCGG suit, which had tried to recover the PLDT shares on grounds they were part of Marcos' ill-gotten wealth. The shares were covered by a complicated web of holding companies, including the Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC) and Prime Holdings, Inc.

Voting 7-4, the Supreme Court upheld PCGG's position that the shares rightfully belonged to the government because they were part of Marcos' allegedly ill-gotten wealth as they were acquired by the Cojuangcos acting as dummies for Marcos.

In its 35-page decision penned by Associate Justice Conchita Carpio Morales, the high court said the PCGG should recover those shares for the government, "they bearing the character of ill-gotten wealth whether they be in the hands of Marcos or those of Cojuangco."

Land feud kills 4 in S. Cotabato

FIGHTING BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND Muslims over land in Mindanao has killed at least four people and forced more than 240 others to flee, officials said yesterday.

The fighting broke out after suspected Muslims fatally shot a Christian couple on Jan. 29 in Polunoling, a village of Tupi, South Cotabato.

Teng Amil and his wife, Norma, were ambushed as they rode a motorcycle, said the province's Army commander Brig. Gen. Alfredo Cayton Jr.

Suspected Christian gunmen retaliated on Monday, strafing a house owned by a local commander of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). No one was hurt, Cayton said.

On Tuesday, suspected Christian attackers killed a MILF member and his wife, prompting a retaliatory attack hours later by suspected Muslim men who fired shots near the site of the killing, causing no injuries, Cayton said.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu could not confirm the fatality was a MILF member, saying only that relatives of MILF members were involved in the feud.

Officials have said the two groups have been fighting over land but gave no details.

Cayton said the Army deployed about 60 soldiers and a number of police in the village and that local officials have imposed a curfew.

"They are now conducting random checks and are banning everyone from carrying guns," he said, adding that about 240 villagers, fearing for their lives, have abandoned their homes and moved into two nearby schools. *AP*

Police beef up security around Danish, other embassies

THE POLICE BEEFED UP SECURITY at the Danish Embassy and placed a task force in charge of securing diplomatic missions on heightened alert yesterday after local Muslims protested cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed that first appeared in a Danish newspaper.

Chief Supt. Wilfredo Garcia said a mobile car was now providing perimeter area security to the Danish embassy in Makati City and Philippine National Police Director Vidal Querol ordered Task Force Diplomatic Shield placed on heightened alert. The task force is based in Makati where most of the embassies are located.

The security measures were taken a day after some 5,000 Muslims burned the Danish flag during a demonstration in Cotabato City last Tuesday.

Anti-Danish demonstrations, some of them violent, have been held in various countries in the Middle East by Muslims angered by the publication of the cartoons, one of which depicts Mohammed with a turban in the shape of a bomb. Muslims consider any depiction of the Prophet Mohammed as blasphemous. *Luige A. del Puerto*

PCGG chief told: Follow the law

INSTEAD OF CHALLENGING the senators to a debate, Presidential Commission on Good Government chair Camilo Sabio should follow the law and resign from the top positions he is occupying in 29 sequestered corporations, Sen. Joker Arroyo said yesterday.

Arroyo said the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officers and Employees, or RA 6713, prohibited Sabio from remaining in these posts while he is PCGG chair.

He also reminded Sabio that the PCGG was under orders from the Supreme Court to disclose to the public any settlement with any person accused of accumulating ill-gotten wealth during the Marcos regime.

P1 budget

Arroyo's statements are the latest in the escalating word war between the PCGG chair and Arroyo and three other senators—Juan Ponce Enrile, Edgardo Angara and Senate President Franklin Drilon—over Sabio's refusal to answer questions concerning a reported compromise deal being worked out with businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. on the P130-billion sequestered shares in San Miguel Corp.

The Senate committee under Enrile has threatened to slash the PCGG's proposed budget for 2006 from P67 million to P1.

Arroyo said Sabio was misleading the public when he claimed that the PCGG charter allowed him not to answer questions from the senators.

"That provision was incorporated to help the PCGG carry out its work unhampered by investigations. It was not designed to give advance immunity to PCGG for anything they do, for wrongdoing," said Arroyo, who helped write the PCGG charter.

He said the protection that Sabio was invoking could not prevail over the superior Bill of Rights provision on the right of the people to information on matters of public concern.

Voided deal

He cited Section 7 of RA 6713 that it would be unlawful for a public official or employee "to control, manage, or accept employment as an officer, employee, trustee or nominee in any private enterprise regulated, supervised, or licensed by their office unless expressly allowed by law."

"It's that clear. The 29 sequestered corporations are under the control of PCGG," he said.

Arroyo said Sabio was prohibited from entering into a compromise agreement with the family or associates of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, citing a Supreme Court decision that voided a compromise agreement with the Marcos family in 1993. *Philip C. Tubeza*

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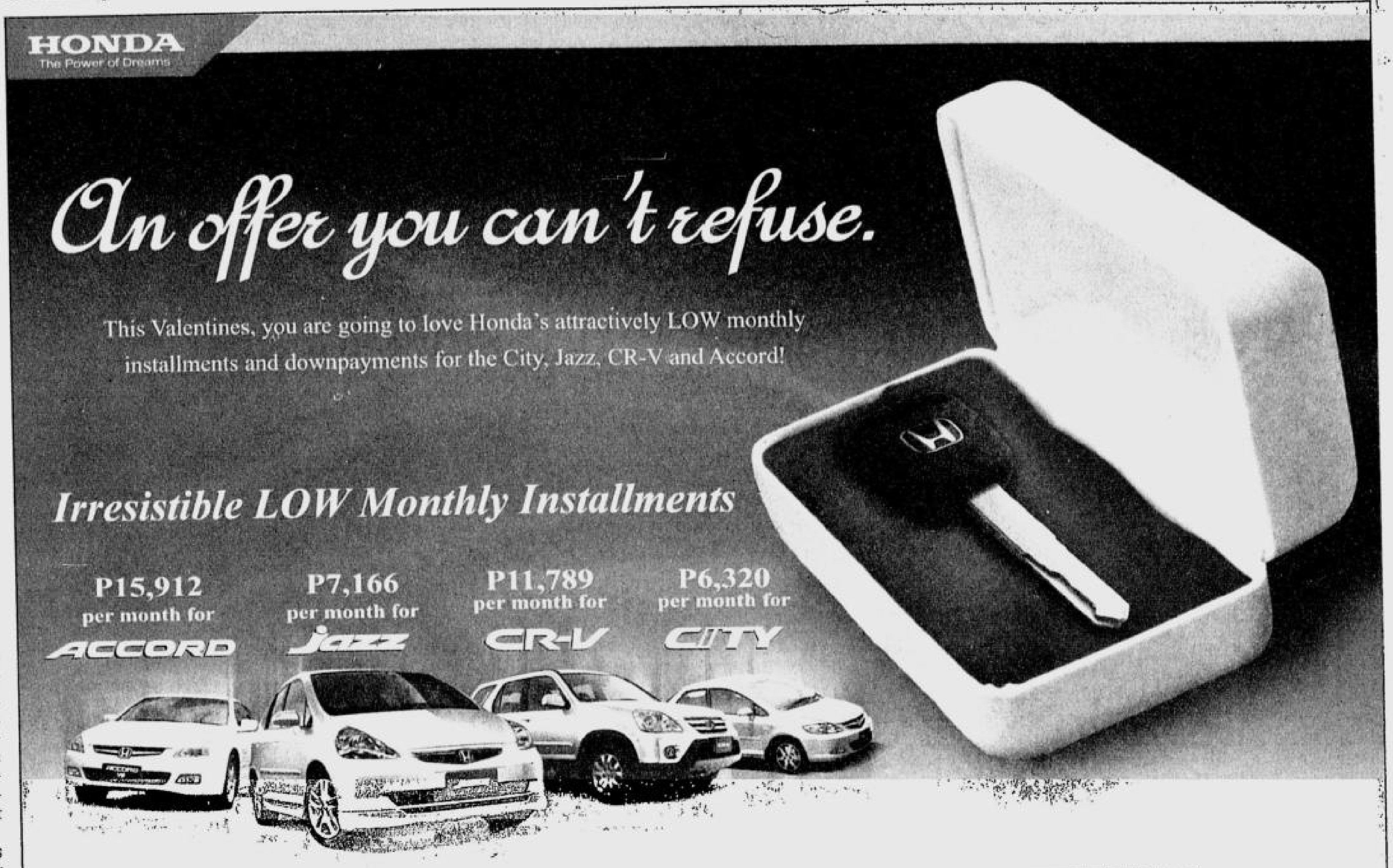
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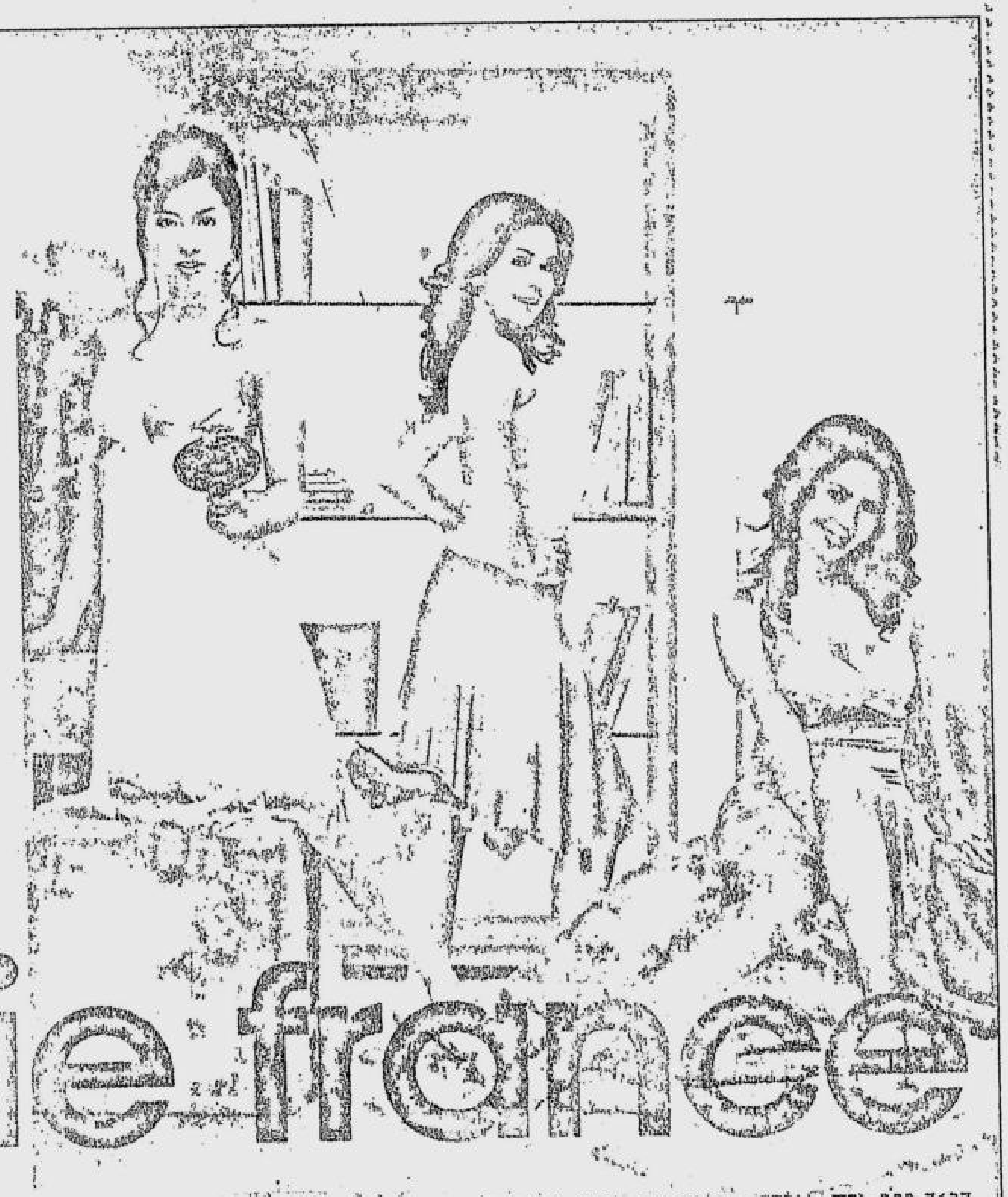

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More woes surface for Lafayette in House hearing

From page A1

The finding prompted Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano to press for the immediate cancellation of Lafayette's mining permit, which will pave the way for the total closure of its operations on Rapu-Rapu.

Mariano was one of the four lawmakers who had sought an inquiry into the toxic spills last Oct. 11 and 30 that allegedly caused fish kills and damaged the livelihood and health of residents in the provinces of Albay and Sorsogon.

Under questioning by Minority Leader Francis Escudero, Carlos Dominguez, LPI CEO and chair, acknowledged that LPI was 74-percent owned by Lafayette Mining Ltd., an Australian listed company, and that the remaining 26 percent was being held by Philco (jointly owned by LG Metals and Kores Inc.), a Malaysian corporation.

"This is a direct violation of the 1987 Constitution and the country's national patrimony," Mariano said.

Holding company

He said "Dominguez's revelation is a strong basis for the immediate cancellation of Lafayette's mining permit and total closure."

Dominguez argued that LPI was only a "holding company" since the actual mining operation was being done by two Albay-based Filipino firms—Ungay Malibago and Rapu-Rapu Minerals.

Mariano, however, told the INQUIRER after the five-hour hearing that LPI was Rapu-Rapu's mother company.

Asked by the INQUIRER about details relating to the corporate setup, Dominguez turned to his lawyer Bayani Agabin.

Agabin said the Mining Act of 1995, as explained by the justice department in a legal opinion, allowed a "layering" of ownership.

As the holding company, LPI wholly owns Rapu-Rapu Processing Inc., the holder of the mineral processing permit, according to Agabin.

"Under the Mining Act, it (mineral processing plant) can be 100 percent foreign-owned," said the lawyer. "The Department of Justice rules it as valid."

Sharing agreement

Assistant Environment Secretary Jeremias Dolino, who was present at the hearing, explained to the committee that the 60-40 capitalization requirement, which prohibits foreigners from owning more than 40 percent of utilities and mining firms, allowed "management consultancy services," known as Mutual Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA).

Dolino said LPI had an MPSA with Ungay Malibago and Rapu-Rapu Minerals on a 40-60 percent ratio. "Management consultancy service is allowed," he said.

In a statement, LPI denied the allegation that Dominguez was fronting or acting as dummy for foreign investors.

"Dominguez has only one share in Lafayette Philippines just so he can be a member of the board. He was elected by shareholders to the board and as an officer of the company and as a professional manager," it said.

Just management control

LPI said the issue was not ownership control but management control, which was given to him by the majority owners.

It said the processing plant, under the law, could be owned 100 percent by foreigners, so there was no need to hide the owners.

"The mining company (as opposed to the processing company) is owned 60 percent by a Philippine company (Rapu Rapu Holdings Inc.) and 40 percent by Lafayette Phils, which is well within the constitutional limit," LPI said.

Upon a motion by lawmakers, committee chair Leovigildo Banaag asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) not to lift the cease and desist order (CDO) against Rapu Rapu Holdings while the company was being investigated.

Fil-Am eyes Filipino designer to dress her for Oscars

From page A1

The Philippine-born Clemente and Rob Pearlstein, as producer and writer-director, respectively, of "Our Time Is Up," were nominated in the Best Short Film, Live Action (as opposed to Animation) category.

In an e-mail interview, Clemente, whose family is from Bulacan, narrated how she learned of the exciting news. When the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences released the list of nominations on Jan. 31, she was in the East Coast, visiting family. "Rob called me and said, 'We're in!' I was amazed and ecstatic."

Clemente thanked everyone who prayed for her film to get nominated, as she had asked them earlier in an e-mail.

Four years ago, she line-produced the Filipino-American film, "The Debut," which starred Eddie Garcia, Tirso Cruz, Gina Alajar and Fil-Am actor Dante Basco.

Of her Oscar nod, Clemente—who moved to the United States with her family when she was 3 years old—wondered if she was, indeed the first Fil-Am to be so cited. But first or not, she said, "I am proud to be part of history in this way. I take pride in my craft, and I am proud of my heritage."

Winston Emano, a Fil-Am community leader and publicist who hosted a media conference for Clemente on Tuesday, said that an inquiry sent to the Academy about this detail had "yielded no confirmation since the organization does not take into account the nominees' nationalities or ethnicities."

There are unconfirmed reports that a Fil-Am male had previously been nominated in the Academy's Special Effects Awards category. Even if this is confirmed, Clemente will still be the first Fil-Am woman to be nominated for an Oscar. In any case, it is a rare honor, and the Filipino-American community here is jubilant.

The New Jersey-raised filmmaker has had a taste of an Oscar win. As a student of Barnard College, Columbia University, Clemente produced "Christmas in New York," which won the 1977 Oscar for Dramatic Student Film.

Near tears

This time around, when at last Clemente saw her name on the Academy's website, she almost cried. "It seemed like something that happened to other people, and here it was happening to me," she recounted.

The short film that made it happen for Clemente stars Kevin Pollack, whose credits include "Casino" and "The Usual Suspects," and Jorge Garcia of the current hit TV series, "Lost." It is a film about a therapist who, learning that he has six weeks to live, adopts a fresh approach to his method of treatment—brutal honesty. Clemente said, laughing, "We had such a talented and funny cast."

Cruel boss shatters . . .

From page A1

years. Despite her surprise, Chona says she was afraid to say anything and felt compelled to sign on to those terms in order to work.

That was the first of many disappointments.

Rather than being taken directly to her employer's house, she says she spent three days "training" at the Singaporean agent's apartment.

Slept like sardines

"They didn't treat us well," says the tiny, short-haired Chona, 26. Although the apartment had separate bedrooms for the agent, her children, and their grandparents, Chona says she and 25 or 30 other Filipino and Indonesian maids slept in the kitchen.

"We slept like sardines," she says.

They were among the roughly 150,000 maids who work in Singapore—and part of the hundreds of thousands of women from the region who serve as domestic helpers to families in wealthy Asian or Middle Eastern countries.

Chona says she was scolded for not closing the agent's car door tightly enough. Another maid was slapped for a similar mistake, she says.

In a perverse way, this was training for what was to come.

'Stupid maid, bloody maid'

After three nights there, the agent took Chona to a condominium where her new boss greeted her oddly.

"I want to see if you're hard-working," the woman said, touching Chona's hand. "Then after that she made me turn three times in front of my agent," Chona says, her voice straining.

Softly, she adds: "She's very fussy."

Each room had to be cleaned with a different-colored cloth. When Chona mistakenly used the orange cloth in the kitchen, the woman became angry.

"Clean again!" she says she was ordered.

The woman, a stay-at-home mother whose husband Chona rarely saw, had two small children: a 5-year-old boy and 16-month-old girl. Chona cooked for the youngsters and their parents, washed and ironed the clothes and cleaned the apartment.

She tried, she says, to do her best.

Her days began at 5 a.m. and did not end until 19 hours later at midnight, she says.

A swirl of purple provides the only color to her black top and black pants that set the somber mood for the story she tells while holding a black bag tightly in her lap. Occasionally, Chona wipes tears from her eyes with a brown handkerchief.

"Stupid maid. Bloody maid. You're worse than a little kid. Monkey!" Chona says she was repeatedly told. She was no different, the woman told her, from the eight other maids who had worked for her.

Chona, a Catholic, prayed that her employer would treat her differently.

No time for church

Sundays were the only time Chona was allowed out—not for church, but to clean and cook at the home of her boss' mother, she says.

"The first time my employer beat me there."

Chona remembers well that morning in late May last year. "Because I forgot to cook the porridge for the baby."

With so many other duties, she says she remembered only at 9 a.m. that the porridge should have been made half an hour earlier. Realizing her mistake, she set about cooking.

It didn't matter. Her boss slapped her on the left cheek with a baby bottle filled with hot milk, she alleges.

"I said to her, 'I'm sorry ma'am.' Even though she beat me, I said I'm sorry."

The family moved to a bigger condominium, which Chona remembers as round, and glassy. That's where the second beating happened, late one afternoon a few days after the first, she says.

Her boss complained that Chona had not cleaned a wooden coaster properly. Then she slammed it into Chona's left breast. It hurt, and left a mark, she alleges.

After nearly two months of abuse and lack of sleep, Chona had had enough.

"Why you beat me?" she confronted the woman.

"Did I beat you?" her boss replied.

"You know what you did, ma'am," Chona said.

The woman sent Chona back to the agent but tried to threaten her into silence over what happened.

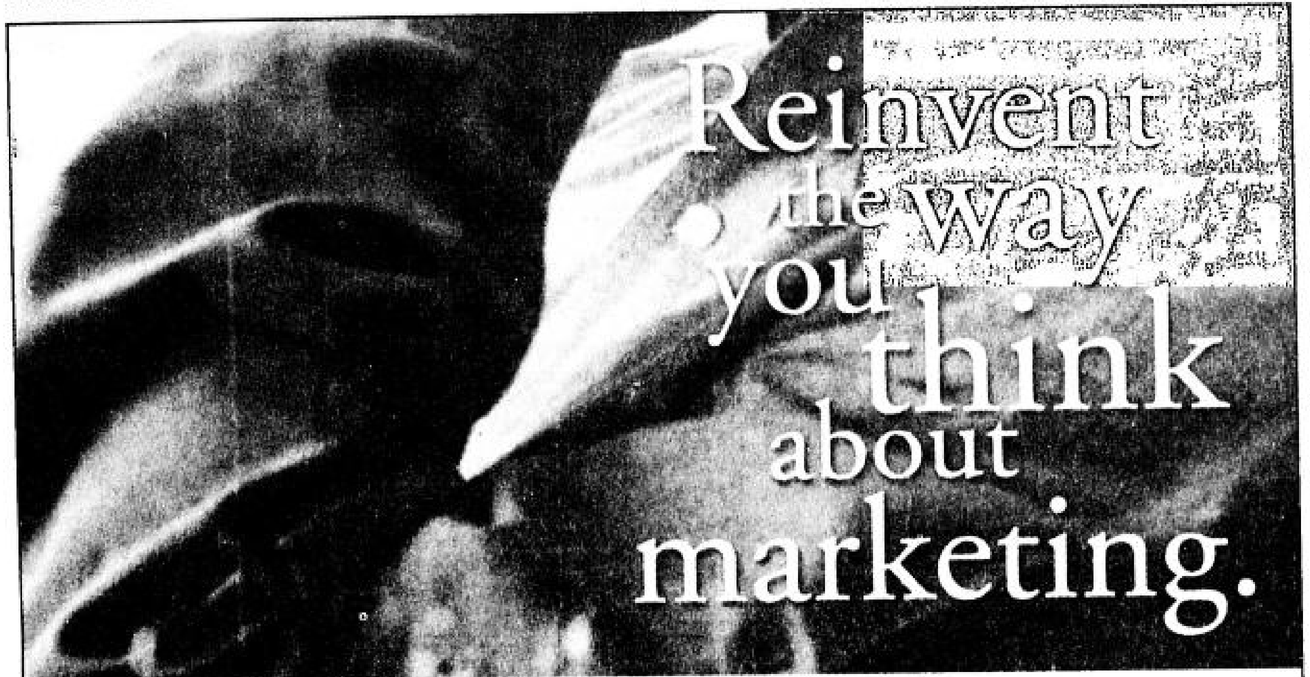
She returned to the "training" center where her disappointment began almost as soon as she had arrived nearly two months earlier. *AFP*

Corrections

IN YESTERDAY'S ISSUE, a photo caption on Page A18 misstated the name of the ABS-CBN chair and CEO. The network's chair and CEO is Eugenio Lopez III—not Eugenio Lopez Jr.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S ISSUE, a story on Page A2-1 of the Entertainment section—"From hotel bed to 'papag' and 'banig'"—misstated the name of the boyfriend of actress Aleck Bovick, a Pinoy Big Brother participant. The correct name of Aleck Bovick's boyfriend is Carlo Maceda—not Morales.



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Church, gov't team up in fight vs AIDS, finally

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE LOCAL ROMAN CATHOLIC Church and the government yesterday agreed to set aside their differences over condoms in a groundbreaking collaboration to fight the country's worsening problem with HIV/AIDS.

In a forum at the Manila Hotel yesterday, representatives of both sectors agreed to take the long route of educating the public on sexual abstinence outside of marriage and fidelity to one's partner within marriage, according to Fr. Anton Pascual, executive director of Caritas Manila.

"We need to concentrate on efforts that unite us rather than on areas that divide us," Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said in a press conference following the meeting arranged by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

The collaboration, described by participants as a first in the Philippines, was forged shortly after the release of a study showing that the number of persons with HIV/AIDS in the country had swollen from 6,000 in 2002 to 11,200 last year.

Using the "workbook method" endorsed by the UNAIDS and the World Health Organization, the new study debunked previous findings that pegged the estimates to a low of 2,000 up to a high of 58,000.

Under the cooperation, the Church and the government would push abstinence and fidelity more aggressively than condom.

"The Catholic Church's prevention approach is in keeping with its traditional teaching which says that sexual activity should be restricted to marriage and that (a person) should be faithful to one partner for life," explained Fr. Robert Vitillo, special advisor on HIV/AIDS to Caritas Internationalis.

Vitillo said this position was supported by studies abroad suggesting that the decrease in infection was primarily the result of sexual abstinence and fidelity to one partner.

"In many places now, governments and other organizations have added those two methods as very effective ways of preventing AIDS," he pointed out.

But the Catholic strategy should not bar governments from coming up with other measures to prevent the spread of AIDS, he said.

"Perhaps, some governments need to add to that," he said, without mentioning the ticklish issue of condom use.

In the past, the government often clashed with the Catholic Church for insisting on condoms as a major measure to keep the virus at bay.

They were often designated as the third line of defense, after abstinence and fidelity. But critics complained that the government had so conveniently peddled the idea of condom use because it was supposedly the easiest to sell.

The Church apparently disagrees with condoms even if used only in situations where sexual contact seemed unavoidable.

Having agreed on a common strategy against AIDS, the Church and the government were now mapping out specific areas of cooperation centered on advocacy and prevention. The idea was to combine their respective efforts.

Caritas Manila, on one hand, is concentrating on the education of high-risk groups such as seafarers, prisoners, intravenous drug users, and the youth and the gay sectors.

The Department of Health, on the other hand, has earmarked around P20 million for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, according to Duque.

On top of the budget was the P20 million spent for the purchase of anti-retrovirals last year, he said.

"We can mitigate the risks through adequate education like peer education and by increasing the networks of voluntary counseling centers," he said.

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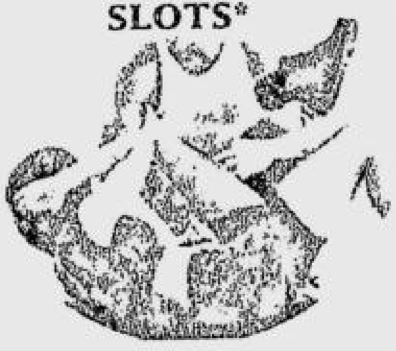

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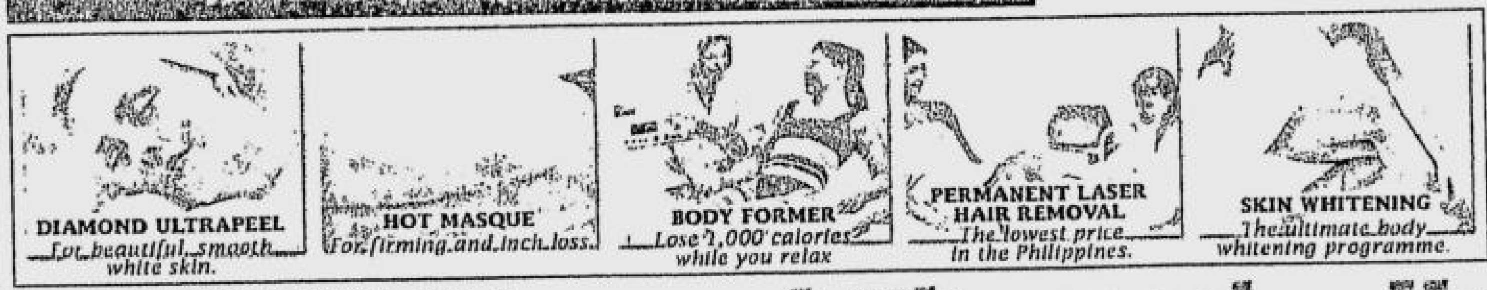
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Prober says sorry, but stands by 'animal' remark

From page A1

III], ABS-CBN, or any of its executives, since I did not even mention the names of [those who could be held liable]," Corpus said.

"I just wanted to say that the people's welfare should be given more consideration next time," he said.

"As I said," he added, "the management of ABS-CBN might not have known about this—that they may have to look into how the event organizers handled [the tens of thousands who gathered for the anniversary show]."

Corpus' remarks had elicited outrage from Lopez, who went on the air hours after the task force's press conference.

'It's the truth'

Later yesterday at the weekly news conference of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita in Malacañang, Corpus reiterated that he was standing by what he had said and was apologizing only to those whose feelings might have been hurt.

"It's the truth, it's the truth. How can you retract the truth?" he told reporters.

Last night, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye issued a statement saying President Macapagal Arroyo had commended the fact-finding team led by Corpus for the "speedy" conduct of its investigation and its "comprehensive" recommendations.

From interviews

"We appeal to all the concerned parties not to allow emotions to override the search for truth and justice. From hereon, let us allow the [Department of Justice] investigation to take its course," Bunye said.

Corpus pointed out over dzMM that what he had said was what he and other members of the fact-finding team "got from our interviews."

He said the team—composed of representatives of the Office of Civil Defense, Department of Health, Bureau of Fire Protection, National Bureau of Investigation and Philippine National Police—took note of the way the estimated 30,000 people massed outside the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City were left to their own devices for days.

Corpus quoted survivors as saying that they had to relieve themselves where they were because they did not want to lose their respective spots in the queue.

The fact-finding team's main finding, however, was that the stampede appeared to have been caused by an ABS-CBN staff member who said "the first 300 people in line beneath the covered walkway along Captain Javier Street would be chosen to participate in the 'Pera o Bayong' portion of the show."

"Offering so few tickets to so many people may be likened to offering a small piece of meat to a pack of hungry wolves," Corpus said in another remark while annotating the task force report on Tuesday.

Mere narration

But for all that, the report appears to have fallen short of what was required to enable the case to progress into a formal criminal complaint.

According to Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, the report contains a mere "narration of the flow of events from Day One up to the date of the incident."

"They merely said there were people responsible for the incident, but they did not specify the names of those people who may be responsible, just [their] positions," Zuño told reporters at noon yesterday.

"That cannot be a basis for preliminary investigation. [The report] did not even cite [incidents of negligence]. We are returning it [to the Department of Interior and Local Government] for further investigation and evidence-gathering," he said.

Zuño said that in order to form the basis of a complaint, the report should have provided the names and addresses of the supposed guilty parties, medical certificates and sworn statements.

He said that if the DOJ prosecutors took the report at face value, they would end up becoming involved in the "case buildup" of the issue, and their neutrality would be compromised.

But then again, Zuño said, the team led by Corpus might have been formed as a fact-finding, and not evidence-gathering, panel.

Only 72 hours

Late yesterday afternoon, Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon said the report might be turned over to the NBI for further investigation and evaluation.

He said the DOJ wanted to be fair to the task force that was given only "72 hours to come up with its factual findings."

"I believe [the team members] did their best given the limited time and resources," he said, noting that the report contained only the statements of the personalities who could be liable for the stampede.

Fadullon said that in filing a complaint, "everything should be based on evidence" and not on "what people say, what people's opinions are, how people perceive it to be."

"There are conflicting statements and opinions cited, but as far as we are concerned, we can only proceed if there is evidence. We need to have evidence to support the conduct of a preliminary investigation," he said.

Thus, Fadullon said, the report would be a "jump-off point," a "lead" on the case.

Asked how he sized up the report, Fadullon said: "I would say that given the time frame given to them, it is a comparatively good report. But as to whether it was exhaustive, that's a different story altogether."

'Stampeding' emotions

In Malacañang, Corpus said his remarks were based on some 50 sworn statements that the fact-finding team had gathered.

Reading from some of the statements, he related how women and children urinated and even defecated where they stood, and how another person could not even raise his arm to get the bottle of water he had in his bag because of the sheer mass of people.

Corpus acknowledged that when he was making a summary of the task force's report at the Tuesday press conference, his emotions "stampeded" when he came to the part of the stampede itself.

"I was just stating the truth based on the statements of the people who were there," he said. "It's hard to face the truth sometimes, but we have to face it. And I'm willing to face the consequences for saying the truth.

Corpus said that if he had hurt the feelings of some people, "I urge them to also face up to the truth so there will be no repeat of this tragedy."

He also said he did not see why his apology would affect the task force's recommendations, which he described as "curative or remedial measures."

Admiration

Ermita expressed admiration for ABS-CBN's Lopez for claiming responsibility for whatever the justice system might determine.

"I would like to say publicly that I admire the action and pronouncements of Mr. Lopez," Ermita said.

The executive secretary also reiterated that the government had ordered an investigation not because it had an ax to grind against the network.

"I think we should try to disabuse the minds of the people. Just because it's known that ABS-CBN and the administration do not see eye to eye on many things, it doesn't mean the administration will take steps to [put] pressure on [the network] ..." Ermita said.

He added: "Let the law dictate what we must do."

Corpus also said that he had no quarrel with ABS-CBN, and that while he did not know Lopez personally, he had "high regard" for the latter.

2nd team of probers

"But sometimes you have to say it like it is, and I felt I had to say it like it is," he said. "I only said that these people did not deserve to be treated like this."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he had formed a second team to investigate further the circumstances of the stampede.

Gonzalez said the five-member panel of prosecutors he formed the other day suggested to him the formation of another team "in order to isolate [the first panel] in the event that the formal preliminary investigation will be necessary."

He said the second team (to be made up of an NBI agent and two prosecutors) would go to hospitals and visit those still confined and check on the nature of their injuries so as to establish whether there was a case for reckless imprudence.

Gonzalez announced that Malacañang would be "ready to assist" people planning a class suit against ABS-CBN "because the mandate of the President is to assist the victims and their families."

The anti-crime group Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) said it would set up a Help Desk starting tomorrow at the PhilSports Arena.

Volunteer lawyers and coordinators will be at the Help Desk to advise stampede victims and assist in consolidating information for a possible class suit, VACC chair Dante Jimenez told the INQUIRER.

Gonzalez also said ABS-CBN's assistance to the victims should be viewed as its legal obligation.

"The law is clear that when you are the culprit or the one who caused the injury, you cannot abandon the victim," he said. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Edson Tandoc Jr.*

ABS-CBN questions credibility of task force

From page A1

Mark Nepomuceno, head of ABS-CBN's corporate human resources department, said at a press conference called by the network.

"We did everything within our power and authority to ensure the safety and success of the event," he said, adding:

"There were government bodies represented in the panel that were involved in the event, and somehow, they've been tasked to investigate themselves."

Among the task force members are Pasig Mayor Vicente Eusebio, who cochairs it with Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus, and Director Vidal Querol chief of the National Capital Region Police Office.

Too soon

Nepomuceno said ABS-CBN "acknowledged" Corpus' apology, but added that the damage had been done. *(See story on Page A1.)*

According to Nepomuceno, it is too soon to say who were responsible for the stampede.

"We don't want to make any statements that could preempt the investigation," he said. "What is clear to us is all those involved in ensuring the safety and success of the event must take a look at themselves to see their participation in the event.

He said, however, that, contrary to the task force's report, ABS-CBN had asked for help from the local government and the police several times.

The network distributed to reporters photocopies of a letter sent to Eusebio, seeking assistance from the police, barangay officials and traffic enforcers, and a memorandum from Pasig chief of police Senior Supt. Raul Medina informing his men of a request by a "Wowowee" associate producer for security assistance.

Maloli Manalastas, ABS-CBN vice president for corporate public relations who moderated the press conference, said the network's primary responsibility was securing the barricades inside the compound of the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra).

"The streets were already a public domain," she said. "We requested the police for support because we believed it would be a joint responsibility as far as crowd [control] was concerned."

Nepomuceno said ABS-CBN was conducting its own investigation "to get a better understanding of what happened by trying to get as much information as we can internally and externally."

Blame-tossing

But Querol said that it was the "Wowowee" organizers who were calling the shots, and that the police should not be blamed for the stampede.

In fact, "now is not the time for blame-tossing," he said, adding that after all, ABS-CBN management had claimed responsibility over what happened.

"If there were shortcomings on our part, the Pasig [police], we will accept that," Querol said. "[But] the question is, what was the specific performance that [ABS-CBN] management wanted [the police to do] and that they had failed to carry out? Was there one? If there was, we can discuss that."

Querol reiterated that during emergency meetings of the production staff before Feb. 4, the police were not called in to take part.

"Now where is the liability of the police there?" he said.

Querol said the police had secured events involving a far bigger number of people, such as the recently concluded Southeast Asian Games, but these did not end up in riots or stampedes.

He said these showed that if there was good coordination between agencies, such an incident could be avoided.

"We should not debate the responsibility due this tragedy," he said. "Otherwise, we will miss the lessons that the tragedy wants us to learn."

No interference

Querol explained that traditionally, show organizers requested police assistance to set up the traffic route and to respond to crimes.

But the police do not "aggressively interfere" with show operations, knowing that millions of pesos in investments are involved, he said.

"To manage the crowd—who will come in first, who should come in, how many are coming in, where to hold the event—this is not the judgment call of the police," he said, adding that in the hours before the stampede, there were no criminal activities requiring the police to step in.

"If ['Wowowee'] went bankrupt, or if we unnecessarily drove away the fans and problems arose, the police could be blamed," he said.

On the other hand, Querol said, the police had learned their lessons.

He said that in the future, the police would no longer leave it to event organizers to decide on "critical issues of incident management, crowd control and security."

In Metro Manila, chiefs of police have been directed to ask local governments not to issue a mayor's permit for shows involving thousands of people pending the submission of papers stating that coordination had been carried out among all pertinent agencies, Querol said.

Feminine face of poverty: Only 3 men died at Ultra

From page A1

day and received financial assistance from ABS-CBN, she added.

Maraya maintained that the abortion was a result of the mother being caught in the stampede.

"She got squeezed while in a very risky stage of pregnancy," she said in Filipino, quoting the woman's in-laws who rushed her to the hospital.

It was just the latest tale of trauma to be recorded days after the tragedy that involved mostly women who made up the majority of the mob that jostled for the free but limited number of raffle stubs Wowowee held up for grabs that morning.

Regarded as a reflection of the hard times, the tragedy also seemed to have unveiled a new, feminine face of Philippine poverty.

The list of the Wowowee's fatalities indicates this sharply imbalanced gender profile: Of the 74 people killed, only three were men—two of whom were aged 74 and 65.

The face is that of jobless mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of the slums who have turned to game shows in hopes of becoming instant millionaires or winning just enough for the day to augment their men's meager incomes, if any.

Willing to queue for hours—an often unpleasant task that the macho side of the Pinoy male may not find worth the trouble—women have provided much of the studio audiences for similar shows and more so in outdoor presentations.

Plea for relief

Theirs are the loudest cheers and the heartiest laughter from the galleries. They might as well be a cry for help.

Not surprisingly, women have also provided not only the most harrowing accounts of death and survival during the stampede but also stories of hard scrabble existence shared by many game show aspirants.

One of the dead, Nita Balibalita of Sto. Niño, Marikina City, had P200 in her pocket when she and her female neighbors went to the PhilSports Arena on Friday night for the noontime airing of Wowowee on Saturday.

The money was courtesy of her live-in partner Reynaldo, a *magbobote* (cart-pushing scavenger).

"I didn't tell her that I just borrowed the money because I didn't want to make her feel guilty about going there," Reynaldo recounted to the INQUIRER at the funeral wake on Tuesday night.

"I really didn't want her to go, but she insisted," he said, adding his partner of 16 years just wanted to take a chance at easing life a little for them and their four young children.

It has been five years since Reynaldo, 39, held a regular job—as a laborer employed by the city government. For her last job, Nita worked as a kitchen helper for a catering service last Christmas.

Will of God

For a bedroom, the couple shared a 2-meter-by-2-meter space at the house of Reynaldo's mother in a depressed area called SMBL Compound. Not surprisingly, the family's one and only appliance was a TV set through which, in Reynaldo's words, shows like Wowowee "bring life" to the household.

Reynaldo said he was not blaming anyone for the loss—calling it the "will of God." But he said all he wanted now was for ABS-CBN to keep its word that it would provide assistance to the victims.

As of yesterday, this assistance had amounted to P10,000 in cash which he had received in two installments from network representatives, plus boxes of juices, biscuits and candies for Nita's wake.

SMBL Compound sent 14 fortune seekers—all women—to Wowowee's first anniversary special.

P50 in her pocket

One of the 13 who returned alive, Teresa Miguel, 36, admitted that she was still in trauma and got "easily startled" even by her lonesome.

Interviewed near the coffin of her friend Nita, she couldn't hold back tears as she recalled escaping death by clinging desperately to a steel bar while human waves swept around her during the stampede.

A former domestic helper in Singapore who has been out of work for years, Teresa said she only had P50 in her pocket when she joined the thousands on the road that led to the PhilSport tragedy.

Like Nita, she got the P50 from her husband, also a scavenger. "All we had was P100 that night for our dinner," said the mother of five. "But he still agreed to give me half so I can go."

Asked what her husband and kids had for dinner with only P50 that night after she had left, Teresa replied: "Probably instant noodles."

Alive!

She was home by noon the next morning, nursing aching muscles, her pocket money down to P20—which would shortly be gone as she needed to buy pain-easing tablets.

In Ivisan, Capiz, relatives awaited the body of Anjolina (Julie) Vargas, who was likewise trampled to death. Her relatives could still not believe that Vargas would die a senseless death.

She and a friend had been running a small eatery in Novaliches the past 10 years and had hoped she could win some money to open a restaurant.

In Santa Rosa City, Laguna, the INQUIRER has learned that 42-year-old Susan Presbitero, who was earlier reported to have died during the stampede, had actually survived with only minor injuries.

Susan's husband Mario and their 10 children wept when they heard Susan's name mentioned in a radio report as one of the fatalities.

"We prepared the clothes she would wear for the funeral. We also phoned our relatives in Ocampo, Camarines Sur, of my sister's death," Susan's younger sister Rosalie said.

At around noon, the grief and wailing inside the Presbiteros' residence was broken by the youngest member of the family.

Spotted alive

"*Ayun si Mama. Buhay ang Mama ko. Hindi siya patay* (There is Mama. My Mama is alive. She is not dead)," said the 2-year-old Rommel as he pointed to their TV set.

The boy pointed to a woman wearing a black blouse behind a reporter of GMA 7.

Susan told the INQUIRER on Monday that she was looking for her seven other relatives who were with her before the stampede and before she was caught by the camera and seen by her family.

She said she had just been released from the Rizal Medical Center where she received treatment for wounds and bruises suffered in the stampede.

Like a miracle

"It was like a miracle ... We were calling for help but nobody seemed to hear us. The people were just jumping and running over us."

Susan said it was her eagerness to have her son Raymond's feet operated on which made her brave the long queue of people at the PhilSport Arena.

"I wanted my son to walk normally and have a better life. If I win in the raffle, I can pay for his operation," she said, sobbing. It was that thought that also kept her alive.

Despite her injuries, Susan was able to muster strength and move away to safety. *With a reports from Felipe V. Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Pacquiao, SMC sign record-breaking deal

From page A1

Representatives of the company declined to reveal the value of the endorsement deal, saying some aspects of the deal have yet to be ironed out.

They admitted, however, that the transaction is "substantial" as it is a "one-of-a-kind deal" and "the biggest for any endorser hired by San Miguel."

Pacquiao's media appearance coincided with an INQUIRER exclusive report about the claim of a former girlfriend that Pacquiao is the father of her son, now two years old.

Joanna Rose Bacosa, 24, yesterday officially filed a suit against Pacquiao for violation of Republic Act No. 9262, which seeks to protect women from violence. She also asked for support for the boy.

But the 27-year-old Pacquiao wanted nothing to do with questions concerning his extramarital affair, or about the boy—allegedly a result of stolen moments he had with Bacosa in a relationship that began in 2003 at a hotel billiard hall.

The former bakery hand who rose to the boxing pinnacle with his spectacular win over Erik Morales of Mexico last month said he only wanted to talk about his boxing and business affairs.

Reward for excellence

"This agreement is in recognition of an excellent athlete who deserves recognition and reward for making our country proud and putting back the Philippines in the world map," said SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon S. Ang.

Under the agreement, signed at the SMC headquarters in Pasig, the boxing sensation will represent San Miguel as a corporation and endorse its beer products, hard liquors and food products.

Pacquiao will tour the country and the Asia-Pacific in the deal which also earned him a title of a "business franchisee." He earlier endorsed SMC brands like Purefoods and Ginebra San Miguel.

SMC also announced that it would sponsor Pacquiao's personal business ventures, including concerts, movies and other promotional activities as a singer, actor and performer. This is on top of providing marketing and distribution assistance to Pacquiao's "MP" product line.

SMC also vowed to support Pacquiao's next international boxing matches, aside from providing him life insurance and producing boxing clinic videos.

Over P100-M deal

"Over the long run, this will exceed the P100 million that FPJ earned from his endorsements," said one official, who requested anonymity.

He said the transaction was a "lifetime partnership" for Pacquiao who would receive regular and royalty payments from the food conglomerate.

Later in the afternoon, Pacquiao attended ceremonies making him the adopted son of Parañaque at the office of Mayor Florencio Bernabe.

A brass band welcomed him. He was gifted with a black dog while a restive crowd waited for his autograph.

Bernabe said the 4-month-old Labrador named Champ would bring Pacquiao good fortune.

"Since this is the Year of the Dog, we gave him a dog so that he would be more lucky," said Bernabe.

"*Ako'y nagpapasalamat sa* dog *na binigay ni* mayor *sa akin … kasing bait ni* mayor, *hindi nangangagat* (I thank the mayor for the dog. He is as good as the mayor, he doesn't bite," Pacquiao said, which elicited laughter from the crowd.

He also refused to entertain questions about Bacosa.

But Pacquiao's lawyer, Jose "Boy" Crisostomo, said that the boxer had no intention of running away from any obligation if Pacquiao was really answerable to Bacosa's claims for support.

"If he is really the father of the child, then he is going to honor his obligations under the law," Crisostomo told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He also pleaded to the media to respect Pacquiao's "right to privacy."

Protection sought

Crisostomo acknowledged Bacosa's move to file a case against Pacquiao but stressed that a settlement would only come when the boy's paternity was confirmed.

In a six-page complaint-affidavit, Bacosa, a former billiard hall spotter and waitress, said she was afraid of what Pacquiao might do to her, considering his wealth and influence as a beloved sports figure.

Her lawyer, Victor Rodriguez, said his client would later also seek a court protection order against Pacquiao along with support for the boy.

Bacosa is prepared to prove the child's paternity through a DNA test, but only on the condition that both her son and Pacquiao take it at the same time in the same hospital, Rodriguez said.

An out-of-court settlement was also possible, Rodriguez said, adding that they sought legal remedy to show that they were not just after the money.

He said Bacosa was not seeking financial support for herself but only for her son. "If we win the case, the money won't go to the mother or to the lawyer, but to her son," Rodriguez said.

A trust fund could be opened for the boy—to be accessible to him only when he turns 21 or completes a four-year course, he added. But there should still be financial support while the boy is growing up, he said.

Jinkee offers P100,000

"I pity my son because despite Pacquiao's wealthy and luxurious lifestyle, he is depriving his son of adequate support," Bacosa said.

She said Pacquiao had given her money a few times, including P300,000 before she gave birth to the boy in January 2004, and smaller amounts in the succeeding months.

But after last November, Pacquiao stopped seeing her and sending money, despite her repeated calls, Bacosa said.

At a press conference in Quezon City, also yesterday, Bacosa said Pacquiao's wife Jinkee contacted her shortly after Pacquiao's celebrated conquest of Morales, and offered her P100,000 to "remain silent and go away." *With reports from Jocelyn R. Uy and DJ Yap*

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GMA no …

From page A1

a president who faces serious charges of electoral fraud, betrayal of public trust, corruption, and gross human rights violations, and who has used every means, both fair and foul, to thwart efforts to hold her accountable? That it's OK to lie, cheat, and steal?" asked Antonio Tinio, chair of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers.

Ms Arroyo is accused of rigging the 2004 presidential election, but she has denied any wrongdoing.

At the Andres Bonifacio Integrated School in Mandaluyong City, she asked pupils to speak straight English and told them a story about how a boy dreamed of riding a magic mat and going to magical places.

Real teachers suffering

Tinio said it was "society's worst nightmare" seeing the President teach a Grade 1 class.

"While Ms Arroyo is happy to play a schoolmarm before the cameras, real public school teachers have suffered greatly under her administration," the ACT chair said.

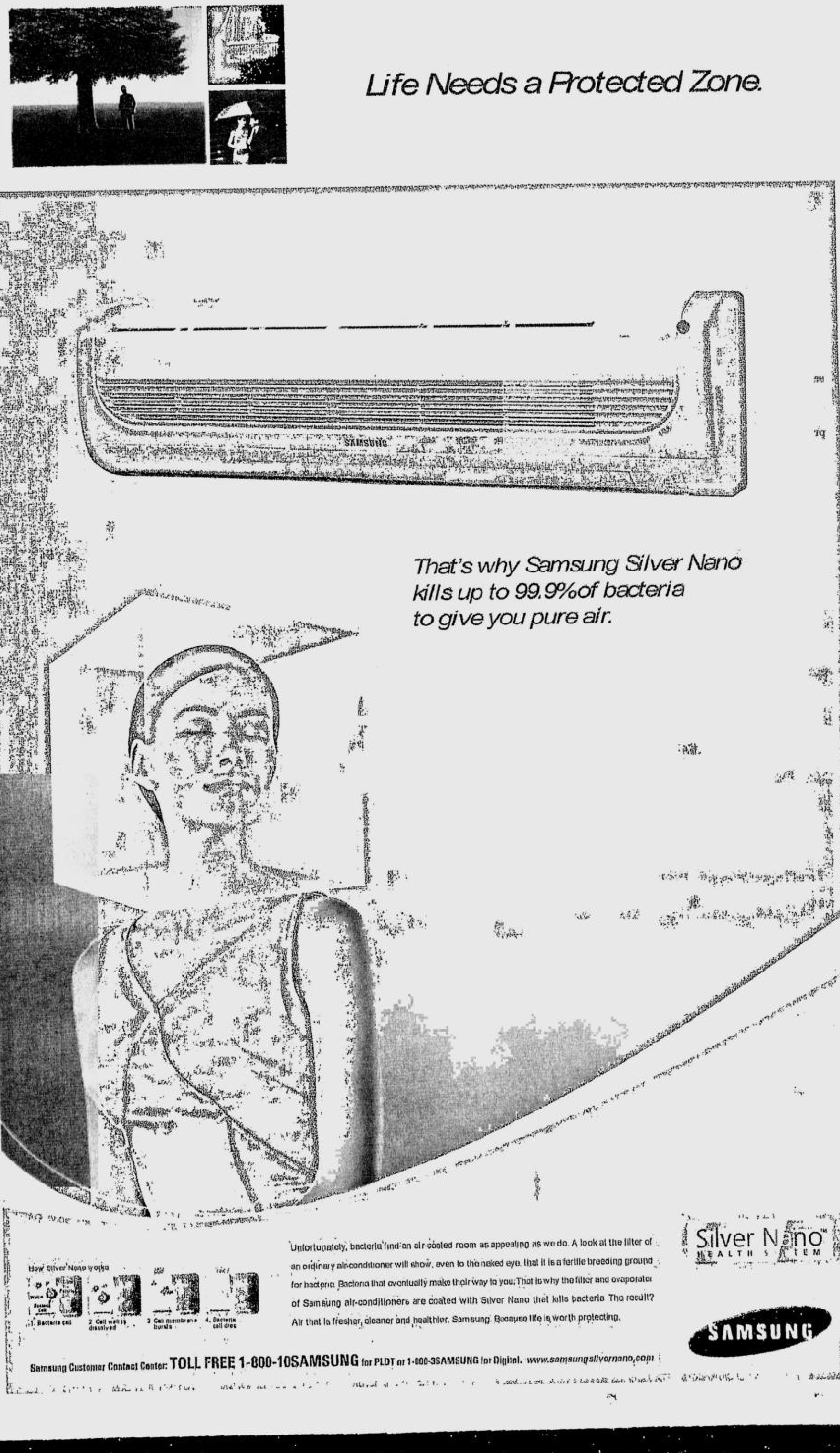
He said teachers had been impoverished by a four-year salary freeze, heavier teaching loads, and worsening working conditions.

Tinio noted that real public spending on education had fallen by 5 percent since 2001, resulting in record shortage of classrooms, teachers, desks and other resources.

Public school teachers have been calling for a P3,000 across-the-board salary increase, the payment of their unpaid cost of living allowance and a substantial increase in government spending for education.

The Youth Demanding Arroyo's Removal (Youth Dare) said Ms Arroyo, who for a time taught economics at Ateneo de Manila University, should be banned from all educational institutions.

"Ms Arroyo playing a school teacher is a clear insult to the thousands of overworked and underpaid public school mentors. Besides, a teacher should be a role model to her student and obviously, the President does not fit the description," said Youth Dare spokesperson Raymond Palatino in a statement. *Alcuin Papa*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Violent protests vs cartoons escalate

KABUL—AT LEAST TWO MORE AFGHANS were killed and 16 wounded on Wednesday in fresh protests against cartoons depicting Islam's most revered prophet that have enraged Muslims around the world.

Tens of thousands of Muslims have demonstrated in the Middle East, Asia and Africa over the drawings, first published in Denmark, then Norway and then several other European countries. At least eight people have died in related violence.

Six have died in Afghanistan alone, where protesters have turned their wrath on local authorities after their attempts to target Western institutions were thwarted.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) head Ekmelettin Ihsanoglu and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana have jointly condemned the widespread violent protests, but also urged respect for religion.

Moderate Muslims, while condemning the cartoons, have expressed fears radicals are hijacking debate over the boundary between media freedom and religious respect.

Accusing "radicals, extremists and fanatics" of fanning the flames of Muslim wrath to "push forward their own agenda," Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen on Tuesday repeated a call for dialogue with offended Muslims.

"We're facing a growing global crisis that has the potential to escalate beyond the control of governments and other authorities," he said.

In Afghanistan on Wednesday, about 600 protesters gathered in the town of Qalat, in southern Zabul province, and hurled stones at police and torched at least one police vehicle.

When they moved towards a nearby US base in the area, Nasim Mullahkhel, the provincial police chief, said officers were forced to open fire.

"I can confirm that two civilians who were wounded by the shooting, have died now," he said, adding nine other civilians were also wounded.

The 12 cartoonists whose work touched off the firestorm were reported to be in hiding, frightened and under police guard. In a twist, Iran's best-selling newspaper launched a competition to find the best Holocaust cartoon.

The French satirical weekly Charlie-Hebdo on Wednesday reprinted the cartoons, saying it was upholding the democratic right of free expression.

French Muslim organizations had tried to prevent the weekly from publishing the 12 caricatures and depiction of the Prophet Mohammad, but a court rejected their suit on Tuesday on a technicality.

The front page of the magazine carried a new cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad burying his face in his hands and saying:

"It's hard to be loved by fools." Inside pages carried the Danish cartoons and an editorial explaining the decision to reprint them.

Although Muslims across the world felt indignant and enraged by the cartoons, the general reaction of Muslims in the Middle East has been measured and peaceful.

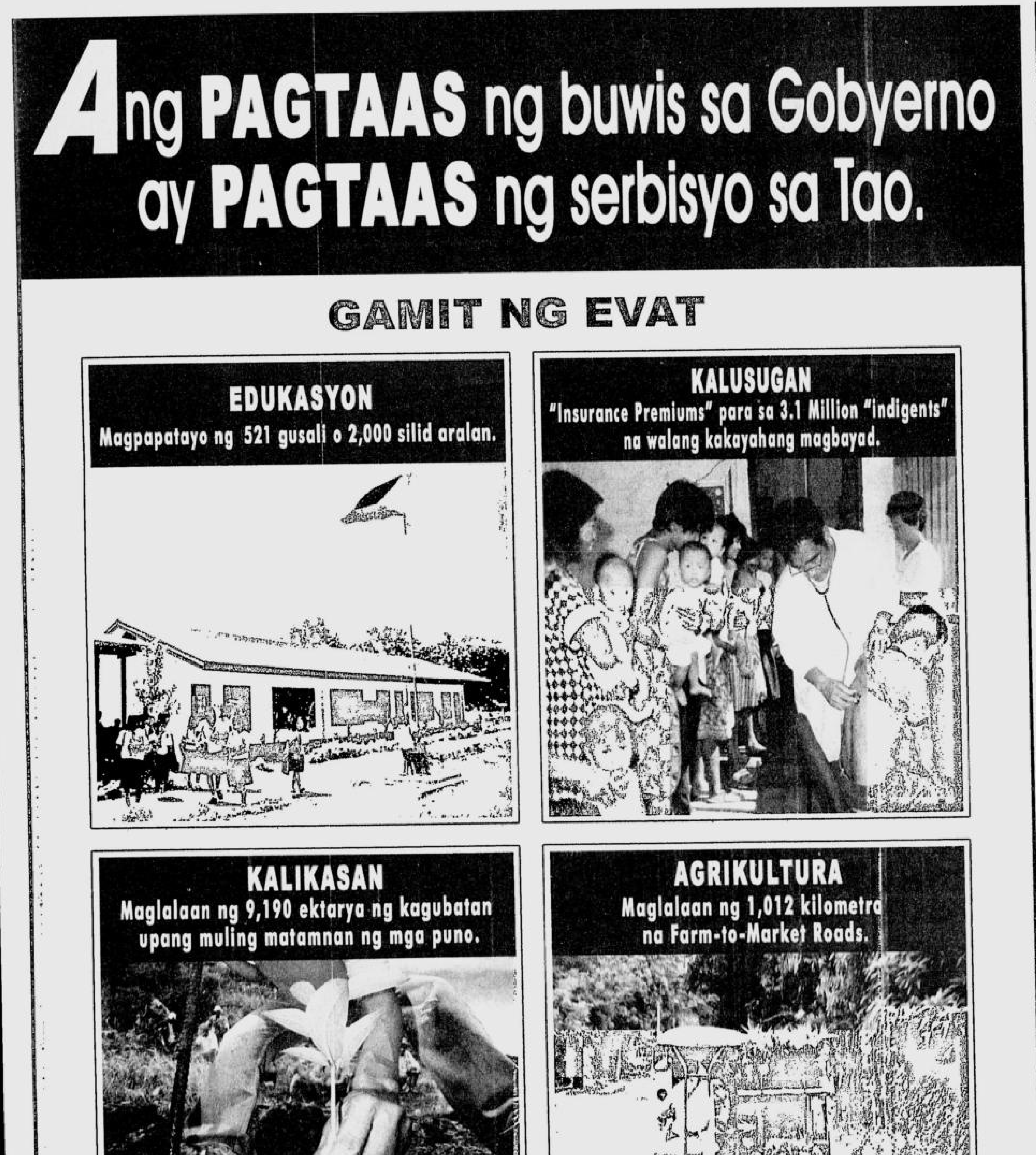
Egypt and Saudi Arabia—seen as the most religiously influential countries throughout the Arab world with large Sunni Muslim population—have not witnessed violent protests.

Analysts said Syria and Iran, both at loggerheads with the West—used the furore to stir anti-Western violent protests for political means.

After rioters set Danish missions ablaze in Syria and Lebanon at the weekend, the European Union presidency issued a strongly worded warning to 19 countries across the Middle East that they were obliged to protect EU missions.

The joint UN, OIC and EU statement said: "We believe freedom of the press entails responsibility and discretion, and should respect the beliefs and tenets of all religions. But we also believe the recent violent acts surpass the limits of peaceful protest."

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, government officials and religious leaders urged calm after Denmark told its expatriate citizens there to leave for their own safety. *Reuters*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EARLY SWIM
Babies swim in a special swimming pool at a care center in Huangshi , Central China's Hubei Province, Feb. 7. Baby swimming has became very popular after it was reported that hydropathy is conducive to the babies' physical and psychological health. REUTERS

World's first 9/11 convict released

HAMBURG—THE FIRST PERSON TO BE CONvicted over the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, Moroccan national Mounir El Motassadeq, was released from a German prison Tuesday pending a ruling on an appeal, authorities said.

The justice department in the northern city of Hamburg said that the decision to release Motassadeq had been made on the basis of a federal court ruling upholding a complaint by the 31-year-old Moroccan.

Motassadeq left the prison in the company of his lawyer on Tuesday evening, according to journalists at the scene.

He had been found guilty in August in a retrial of belonging to a terrorist organization for plotting holy war with fellow Muslim extremists, including three of the Sept. 11 suicide hijackers in New York and Washington.

He was jailed for seven years but both the prosecution and the defense have appealed the sentence.

His lawyer Gerhard Strate told AFP he filed the suit demanding Motassadeq's release with the federal constitutional court in the southwestern city of Karlsruhe on the grounds that he had been held in custody during the yearlong retrial. *AFP*

Captain refused to help Egypt ferry

CAIRO—THE CAPTAIN OF A RED SEA FERRY has admitted he steered clear of a doomed ship that sank between Saudi Arabia and Egypt with the loss of about 1,000 lives to avoid a "second catastrophe."

"I took the decision not to turn around to protect the lives of the 1,800 passengers on board the Saint Catherine" which was headed for the Saudi port of Duba, Salah Jomaa told Tuesday's edition of Egyptian government daily Al-Ahram.

he Al-Salam Boccaccio 98, which like the Saint Catherine belonged to the Al-Salam shipping company, sank en route from Duba to the Egyptian port of Safaga last week after an onboard fire, in one of the worst maritime disasters in living memory.

Jomaa said turning to aid the stricken vessel could have sunk his own vessel, "especially as the weather conditions were bad and the waves high."

Al-Salam had radioed the Saint Catherine to ask whether the captain could turn back and mount a rescue effort for the Boccaccio 98, which was carrying 1,400 people when it sank. *AFP*

US mulls UN resolution on Burma

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States will consider introducing a resolution in the UN Security Council to step up international pressure on military-ruled Burma (Myanmar) for alleged human rights abuses, the state department said Tuesday.

"We would look at that option very, very carefully and we would look at all UN options, all UN options," Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs Christopher Hill told a congressional hearing after legislators pressed for such a resolution.

Washington put the international spotlight on Burma in December when it successfully pushed the Security Council, despite initial objections from China and Russia, to hold a briefing on human rights and other problems in the Southeast Asian state for the first time.

Not satisfied with this, US legislators Tuesday pressed Washington, current president of the UN Security Council, to put Burma formally on the agenda of the powerful UN panel, a move that could lead to resolutions of condemnation and raise pressure on the military rulers.

Hill agreed that the Burma situation warranted continued UN Security Council attention "and we are considering next steps in that body."

On the prospect of a Security Council resolution, he said, "It is our very strong belief that this is an issue that does require a broad number of players and the Security Council is an appropriate place to be informed and to look very closely what the next step is."

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan "has designated 2006 as the year for bringing about a transition to democracy" in Burma "and we take the target very seriously," Barry Lowenkron, the Assistant Secretary of State for democracy and human rights, said in his testimony.

Burma's military junta has been accused of operating a strict police state and restricting basic rights and freedoms.

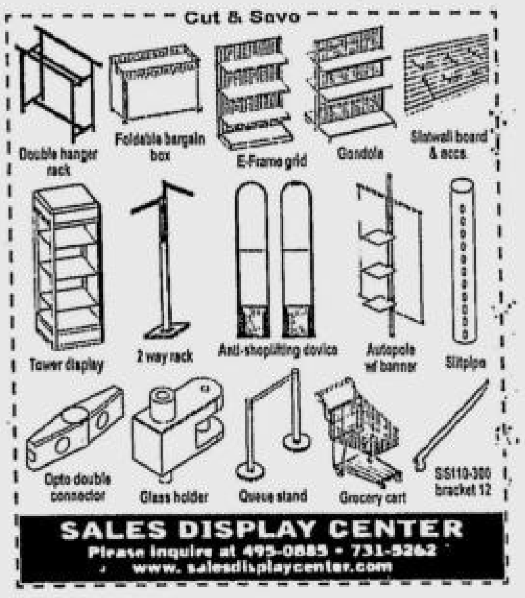
Aung San Suu Kyi, the country's democracy icon and Nobel peace prize winner, has been under house arrest for more than 10 of the past 16 years and kept isolated from the outside world.

Her party won the 1990 elections in a landslide but was never allowed to govern.

US legislators said a UN Security Council resolution on Burma should call for, among other things, the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi, a timeline for compliance and punitive sanctions if the military junta failed to comply.

The resolution must be framed "in the strongest possible terms," said Republican Rep. Chris Smith, who chaired the hearing.

But any US move to haul Burma to the UN Security Council could face opposition from permanent council members Russia and China as well as Malaysia, which is playing a central Southeast Asian role to prod Burma into embarking on reforms. *AFP*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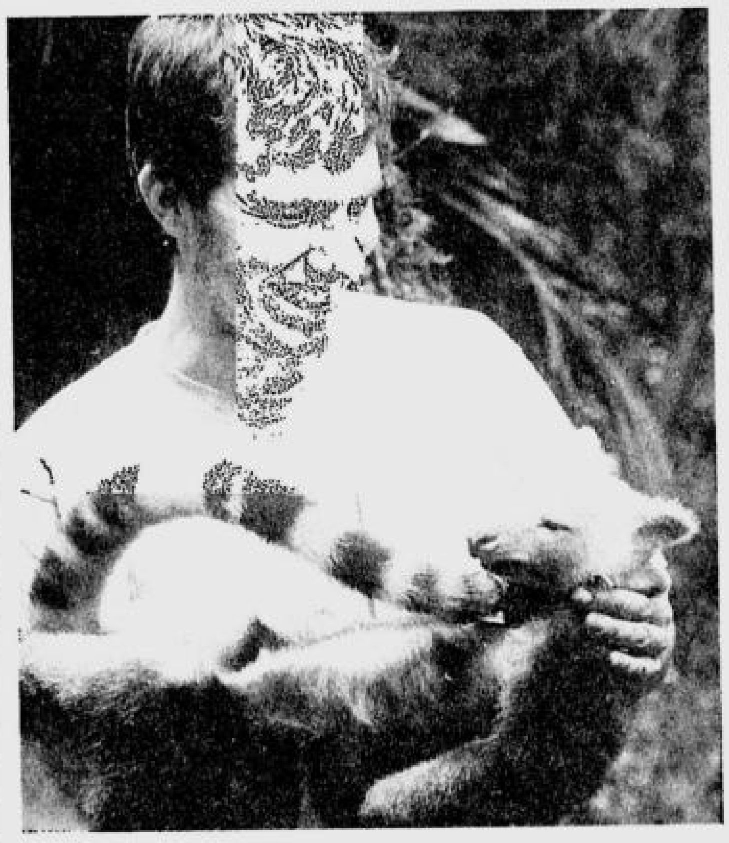


'LOST WORLD'
This undated handout photo obtained February 2006 from Conservation International shows an unidentified researcher holding the new species of "Dendrolagus pulcherrimus," discovered from the Foja mountain in Papua, Indonesia. AFP

Yemen hunts Qaida fugitives

SANAA—YEMEN HAS LAUNCHED an intensive search in the capital and other parts of the country to try to recapture a group of at least 13 convicted al-Qaida members who fled from prison last week, an official said on Tuesday.

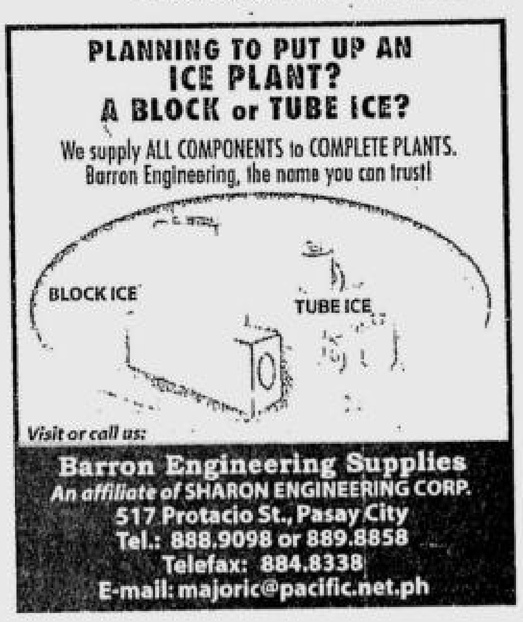
Dozens of the fugitives' relatives and friends have been detained for questioning, said the official, who did not wish to be identified.

The official said the main search effort was in the Abyan province in the south, but also the capital Sanaa as well as remote areas.

On Sunday, the Interpol issued a global security alert over the escape of the militants who tunneled their way out of a jail in Sanaa, calling them a "danger to all countries."

The 13 militants were among 23 inmates who escaped in a major embarrassment for Yemen, which has cracked down on militants in the ancestral land of Osama bin Laden and positioned itself as an ally of the United States.

They included Jamal Badawi, mastermind of the bombing of the US destroyer Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden in October 2000, which killed 17 US sailors. He was originally sentenced to death, but this was later commuted to 15 years in prison. *Reuters*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Round-the-world solo flight delayed

MIAMI—US MILLIONAIRE AVIATOR Steve Fossett is set to take off Wednesday in his quest to break a record for a round-the-world solo flight one day after postponing a planned takeoff due to strong winds, organizers said.

Fossett will try to take off in his Virgin Atlantic GlobalFlyer aircraft from the Kennedy Space Center on Wednesday between 6:40 a.m. and 7 a.m., a spokesperson for Fossett's mission control, Suzanne Weldon, told AFP.

The flight was postponed Tuesday due to strong winds and a fuel leak, mission control said.

"The fuel leak is fixed and we believe the worldwide wind pattern is acceptable," added Fossett, 61. "I hope to be flying in the morning."

The weather at Cape Canaveral, Florida, had been problematic even late Monday, with organizers initially saying the forecast for Tuesday was "marginal, but satisfactory" for launch.

Jon Karkow, in charge of the airplane's fueling, said the fuel leak was due to an untested new part that did not seal properly.

Fuel loss is something that worries Fossett's team: during his first record-setting flight around the world completed in March 2005, Fossett reached his final destination in Salinas, Kansas, with less fuel than anticipated.

As planned, Fossett's newest adventure would take him 41,978 km in approximately 80 hours, 1,126 km farther than the 1999 around-the-world balloon trip by Brian Jones, a Briton, and his Swiss partner Bertrand Piccard on the Breitling Orbiter III.

That would also beat the distance record set by Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager in their nine-day, non-stop trip around the world without refueling aboard the Voyager aircraft in 1986. That trip logged a total of 40,212 km. *AFP*

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

	Approved Budget
5KV and 15KV Medium Voltage Switchgears under FGJ 50986	PHP 2,525,000.00
Two Hundred Eighty (280) Cubic Meters Liquid Caustic Soda under GT 517414	PHP 4,650,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance upon payment of a non-refundable fee at the above address based on the following schedules

PR No.	Date of Issue	Cost per Document	Contact Person
FGJ 50986	February 03, 2006	PHP 400.00	Mr. Harold T. Fontillas loc. 5291
GT 517414	February 03, 2006	PHP 400.00	Mr. Anthony E. Celaco loc. 5288

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall also be held on February 10, 2006 for FGJ 50986 and GT 517414, 2:00 p.m. at the above address. Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Procurement Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Procurement Department Wall Clock Time) of February 24, 2006 for FGJ 50986 and GT 517414. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Feb. 3 & 9, 2006)

US teen convicted of killing his family

ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO—JURORS convicted a 16-year-old boy in the shooting deaths of his family on newsman Sam Donaldson's ranch despite defense attorney's claims that the teen was abused by his parents.

Cody Posey was convicted of murder in the deaths of his stepmother and stepsister and voluntary manslaughter in the death of his father, who worked as foreman on Donaldson's ranch in southern New Mexico.

Posey also was convicted of four counts of evidence tampering. He hung his head and wept as the verdicts were read.

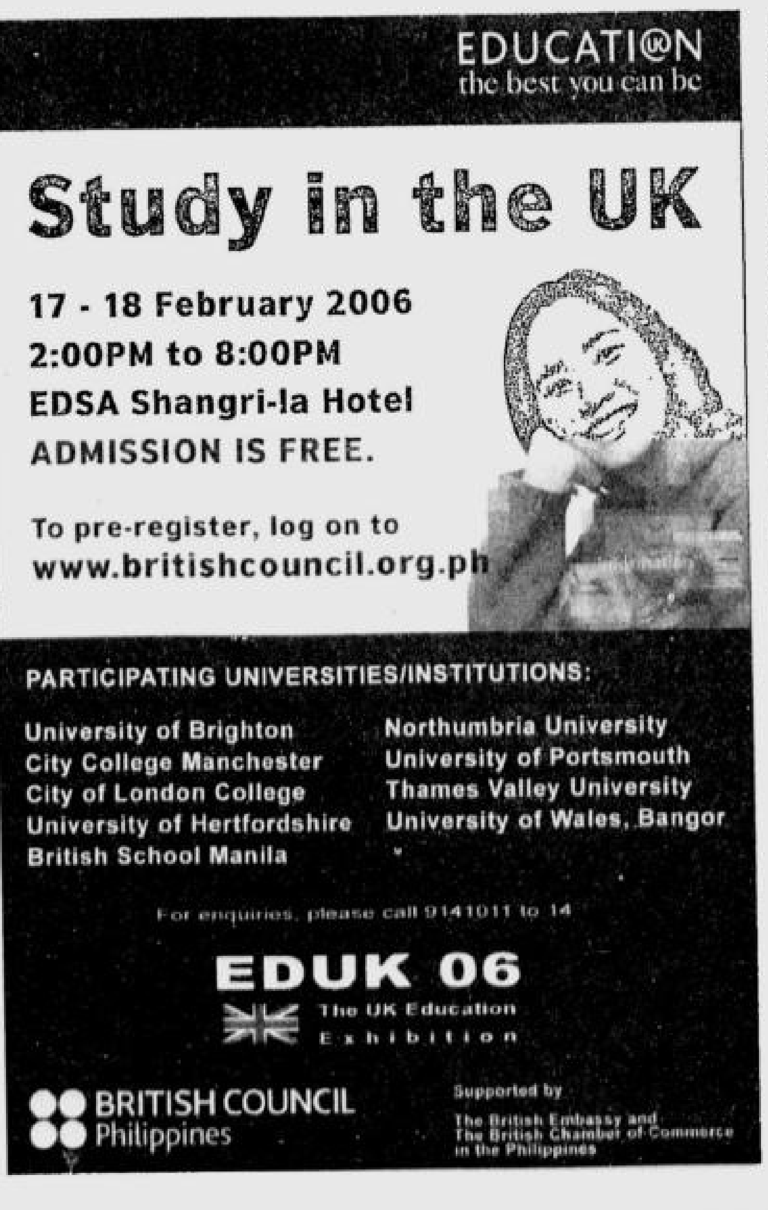
Posey could face life in prison on the first-degree murder charge in the death of his stepsister. State District Judge Waylon Counts said a sentencing hearing would be scheduled within 30 days.

The teen was arrested a few days after the bodies of his father and stepmother, Paul and Tyrone Posey, and his 13-year-old stepsister, Mary Lee Schmid, were found hidden in a manure pile on Donaldson's Chavez Canyon Ranch in July 2004.

Donaldson was the trial's first witness, taking the stand Jan. 17 to describe finding a bloody scene upon returning from a trip.

The jury, which heard three weeks of testimony, began deliberating Monday.

Verlin Posey, brother of Paul Posey, told reporters outside the courthouse he was pleased with the verdict but disappointed the teen was not convicted of first-degree murder in his brother's death. *AP*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Four presidents and a raucous funeral

LITHONIA, GA.—SPEAKERS SEIZED ON the presence of US President George W. Bush to attack his policies on Tuesday at the funeral of Coretta Scott King, the first lady of the US civil rights movement.

Jimmy Carter, one of four presidents to speak, took a jab at Bush's domestic eavesdropping program during six hours of sermons, speeches and song for the late widow of Nobel peace laureate Martin Luther King Jr., assassinated in 1968.

The 10,000 mourners also heard the Rev. Joseph Lowery, a civil-rights leader, cite Mrs. King's legacy as a champion of racial equality while launching barbs at Bush administration policies on Iraq and health care.

Mrs. King, 78, died on Jan. 30 of complications from ovarian cancer. Her funeral at a Baptist church in Lithonia, Georgia, drew a "who's who" of the political and entertainment worlds and the US civil rights community.

US PRESIDENT George W. Bush (from left), former US President Bill Clinton, US Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and former President George H.W. Bush attend the memorial service. AFP

She was due to be buried alongside her husband at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change she founded in nearby Atlanta.

With Washington debating the legality of Bush's domestic eavesdropping on Americans suspected of ties to al-Qaida, Carter drew spirited applause with comments on federal efforts to spy on the Kings decades ago.

"It was difficult for them personally with the civil liberties of both husband and wife violated, and they became the targets of secret government wiretapping and other surveillance," Carter said.

Former President Bill Clinton, a favorite among mainstream civil rights leaders, offered a teasing hint of the possible presidential candidacy of his wife, New York Democratic Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who stood smiling at his side.

"I'm honored to be here with my president and my former presidents and …" he trailed off, motioning in his wife's direction to loud and sustained applause.

Speaking first, ahead of his critics, Bush said: "I've come today to offer the sympathy of our entire nation at the passing of a woman who worked to make our nation whole.

"Having loved a leader she became a leader. And when she spoke Americans listened closely, because her voice carried the wisdom and goodness of a life well-lived," he said.

Lowery, former head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which Martin Luther King helped found in 1957, gave a playful reading of a poem in eulogy of Mrs. King and made a none-too-veiled reference to the Iraq war launched by Bush.

"We know now there were no weapons of mass destruction over there/But Coretta knew and we knew that there are weapons of misdirection right down here/Millions without health insurance. Poverty abounds. For war billions more but no more for the poor," Lowery said.

The mourners responded with a standing ovation. Bush's immediate reaction could not be seen on television, but after Lowery finished speaking, the president—who sat behind the speakers—shook his hand and laughed.

Bush's father George Bush, the fourth president at the funeral, broke any tension by recalling his own meetings as president with Lowery and gave a score: "Lowery 21, Bush 3, it wasn't a fair fight."

The service, billed as a celebration of Mrs. King's life, featured performances by Stevie Wonder and Michael Bolton.

Mourners joined a choir in singing some of King's favorite gospel songs, among them "Amazing Grace."

Mrs. King's daughter Bernice, a minister, gave the eulogy, saying of her mother: "She was not just a national figure, she was a global leader."

Born April 27, 1927, near Marion, Alabama, Coretta Scott King played a back-up role in the civil rights movement until her husband, a Baptist minister, was gunned down in Memphis on April 4, 1968. *Reuters*

Antiterror chief of CIA quits

WASHINGTON—THE head of the CIA's counterterrorism center has been forced to step down as part of efforts by the spy agency to bolster its pursuit of al-Qaida, current and former intelligence officials said on Tuesday.

Robert Grenier, 51, told colleagues in an e-mail on Monday that he had been asked to move on from the helm of the unit that plans and executes CIA counterterrorism operations and provides analysis on terrorism issues.

It was not clear whether Grenier planned to leave the spy agency and there was no immediate word on who would succeed him in the counterterrorism post.

The CIA has been criticized for failing to track down al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and his second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahri, who are believed to be somewhere along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan.

A failed CIA attempt to eliminate Zawahri with a missile strike last month in Pakistan was condemned in Islamabad and set off anti-American protests across the country after 18 civilians including women and children died in the attack. *Reuters*

Muslim cleric who incited murder jailed

LONDON—THE British Muslim cleric whose London mosque was at the center of some of the most important terrorism cases of the last decade was sentenced to seven years in jail on Tuesday for inciting murder of Jews and unbelievers.

Egyptian-born Abu Hamza al-Masri, 47, preached at the Finsbury Park mosque where convicted "shoebomber" Richard Reid and Sept. 11 plotter Zacarais Moussaoui worshipped.

"He was directly and deliberately stirring up hatred against Jewish people and encouraging murder of those he referred to as nonbelievers," Britain's Crown Prosecution Service said.

"Not only did he repeatedly advocate that Muslims should kill nonbelievers, he set out to persuade his listeners that it was part of their religious duty to do so," it said. *Reuters*

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2nd International
Health and Hygiene Symposium
Better Health and Hygiene: Today's Challenges, Tomorrow's Hopes

HEALTH AND HYGIENE CHALLENGE: FAST-TRACKING PROMOTION

The importance of promoting health and hygiene as development intervention will be the main focus of discussion as some 150 health and hygiene professionals from seven countries meet in Manila from February 9-10, 2006 for the 2nd International Health and Hygiene Symposium.

The symposium theme "Better Health and Hygiene: Today's Challenges, Tomorrow's Hopes" makes strong reference to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals which include sanitation and hygiene in the Plan of Implementation, and the global community's acknowledgement of the importance of health and hygiene promotion as development intervention.

Hosted by Procter & Gamble Distributing Philippines, Inc. (P&G), through its flagship brand Safeguard, the symposium, which is a follow-through to the first one held in Beijing, China last July 2002, then hosted by the Safeguard Research Institute of Family Health and the China Ministry of Health, will be attended by key scientific and government thought leaders from China, Russia, Pakistan, Mexico, Singapore, USA and host country, the Philippines.

Philippine Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque is expected to address the global challenge of health and hygiene promotion, education and intervention to improve the health, well-being and economic productivity of the population.

The two-day symposium's objectives are 1) to share scientific data and knowledge on the importance and effectiveness of good hygiene practices
in preventing and controlling diseases; and 2) to exchange hygiene education and intervention program experience among participating countries, especially where public and private sector collaboration are concerned.

Hosting this important international gathering is made more significant for Safeguard as it celebrates its 40th year in the Philippines. Safeguard added a new dimension to health and hygiene when it was introduced to Filipino families in 1966. It has become a Philippine institution in hygiene promotion and education having successfully partnered with PAMET, UNICEF and DOH, among others, for school and community hygiene intervention.

Aside from providing a strong communication platform with health and hygiene experts from developed and developing countries, the symposium also raises awareness of the importance of basic personal hygiene such as proper hand washing and bathing. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that nearly 40% of the world's population (2.4 billion) have no access to hygienic means of personal sanitation resulting in the deaths of millions of people, including children, from various diseases caused by inadequate sanitation.

WHO believes that increasing access to sanitation and improving hygienic behavior are key to reducing this burden of disease.

Symposium participants are expected to develop proposed action plans for governments, non-government organizations, the scientific community and private sector to commit to reducing the main risky hygiene practices and conditions among people especially in developing countries and turning this commitment into reality.

40 YEARS OF SAFEGUARD: Sustainability In Action

The concept of sustainable development as a way to ensure better quality of life for everyone is an effort that businesses, government and non-government organizations are increasingly embracing. While many have their own ideas about sustainable development or what a better quality of life means, Procter & Gamble (P&G) has taken it as an opportunity to responsibly leverage its products and innovations for the benefit of everyone.

From the beginning, P&G's embrace of sustainable development has been based on the company's vision that it can grow business by bringing to the marketplace innovations and technologies that touch the lives and improve the quality of life of consumers. It is this vision that brought Safeguard to the Philippines. Its introduction to the country in 1966 added a new dimension to family health and hygiene among Filipino consumers. It brought to life the "konsensya" of Filipino mothers and sparked consciousness for better family hygiene. Today, Safeguard continues to be the nation's health partner and an institution in health and hygiene promotion.

P&G has chosen to focus on health and hygiene as part of its sustainability effort because it has a significant impact on its consumers. For 40 years, Safeguard, P&G's flagship brand, has been at the forefront in health and hygiene promotion in the country.

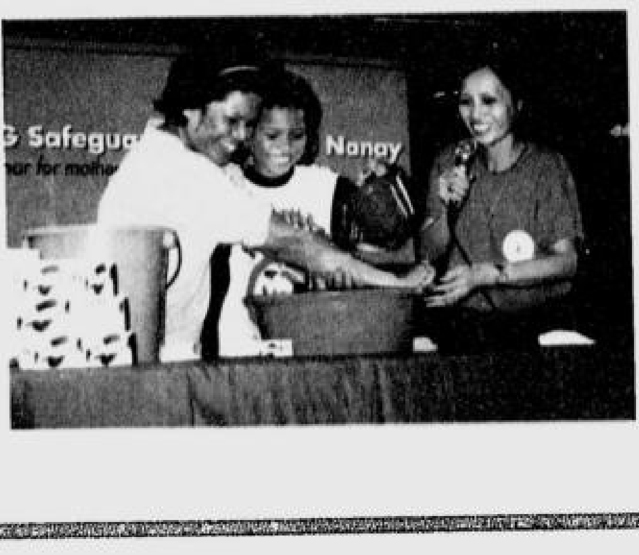
Safeguard's health and hygiene promotion efforts stem from the fact that while the provision of sanitation and hygiene facilities is vital to improving health and hygiene in families, schools and communities, it does not necessarily mean that people use them effectively. It does not ensure that the prevalence of infectious diseases automatically decreases. People need to be made aware of proper hygiene practices.

In a message launching a nationwide educational roadshow to promote hygiene in 2002, Johnip Cua, P&G Philippines president and general manager, said "We at Procter & Gamble, through Safeguard, have made the promotion of good hygiene habits among Filipinos a priority. Safeguard's vision is to help a healthier nation. We have been single-minded in our educational message: Practicing proper hygiene habits, with soap that provides superior protection against germs, helps families stay healthy."

In 1997, P&G, UNICEF and five other agencies, namely the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (PAMET); the Department of Education and Culture, the Department of Health; the Philippine Hospital Association and KBP, the national association of broadcasters, formed an alliance to undertake a National Health and Hygiene Program under a project called *Kalinisan, Kalusugan, Kaunlaran (KKK)*. The project aims to reduce the incidence of hygiene-related diseases through proper hygiene education in schools and communities. The program highlights the importance and practice of the *Three Steps to Good Health (hand washing, bathing and keeping the surroundings clean)* which is recognized as the simplest yet most cost-effective way to prevent diseases.

Today, Safeguard continues to create a strong bond with Filipino consumers, touching and improving their lives through partnership programs like *Alagang Safeguard, Alagang Nanay* for the family, Safeguard-UNICEF *Handog 2Big Operation (H2)* for school children and *Handog ng Safeguard Medtechs ng Kinabukasan Scholarship Program* for the youth, among others.

As it celebrates its 40th year of health and hygiene promotion in the country, Safeguard, together with the KKK organizations composed of PAMET, the Philippine Hospital Association and the National Confederation of Barangay Health Workers, is hosting the 2nd International Health and Hygiene Symposium. To celebrate its 40th year together with Filipino families, Safeguard brings back the KKK Program and once again, brings attention to the basic household hygiene practices of hand washing and bathing through fun-filled hygiene education programs in schools and barangays. Hand washing and bathing are recognized as simple, cost-effective ways to protect the family.



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OPINION

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Too hot to handle?

EDITORIAL

THIS WE'VE GOT TO SEE. THE OFFICE OF THE OMbudsman has formed a 10-member task force to investigate the P728-million fertilizer scam and Acting Assistant Ombudsman Evelyn Baliton vowed that they would follow the paper trail wherever it may lead. If the trail leads to Malacañang and there is strong evidence linking President Macapagal-Arroyo to the scandal, then the task force will recommend the filing of an impeachment complaint against her, Baliton said.

That's as bold and clear as any declaration of intent can be. But until the task force actually files the charges (or makes the recommendation for her impeachment, in the case of the President), nobody should bet on the probers' getting anywhere with the case.

From the start, the Ombudsman apparently wasn't all too eager to touch this hot potato. It had to be shaken up and pushed by Senate President Franklin Drilon, among others, before it could bring itself to act on the case.

As early as June 2004, a farmers' organization had already filed a plunder case against the President and several officials of the Department of Agriculture. That case has since been gathering dust in the archives of the Ombudsman.

The scandal was brought back to the limelight in September last year by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. The Senate began its investigation about 10 days later and has since held six nationally televised hearings. In between those hearing, there have been many widely publicized reports related to the case, especially about the mysterious comings and goings (mostly the latter) of Jocelyn Bolante, the former agriculture undersecretary who administered the funds and who has refused to honor the Senate's summons for him to testify on the case.

And yet it's only now that the Ombudsman has bestirred itself to give the case some serious consideration. Isn't the agency tasked not only to look into complaints filed by others but also to investigate cases on its own initiative?

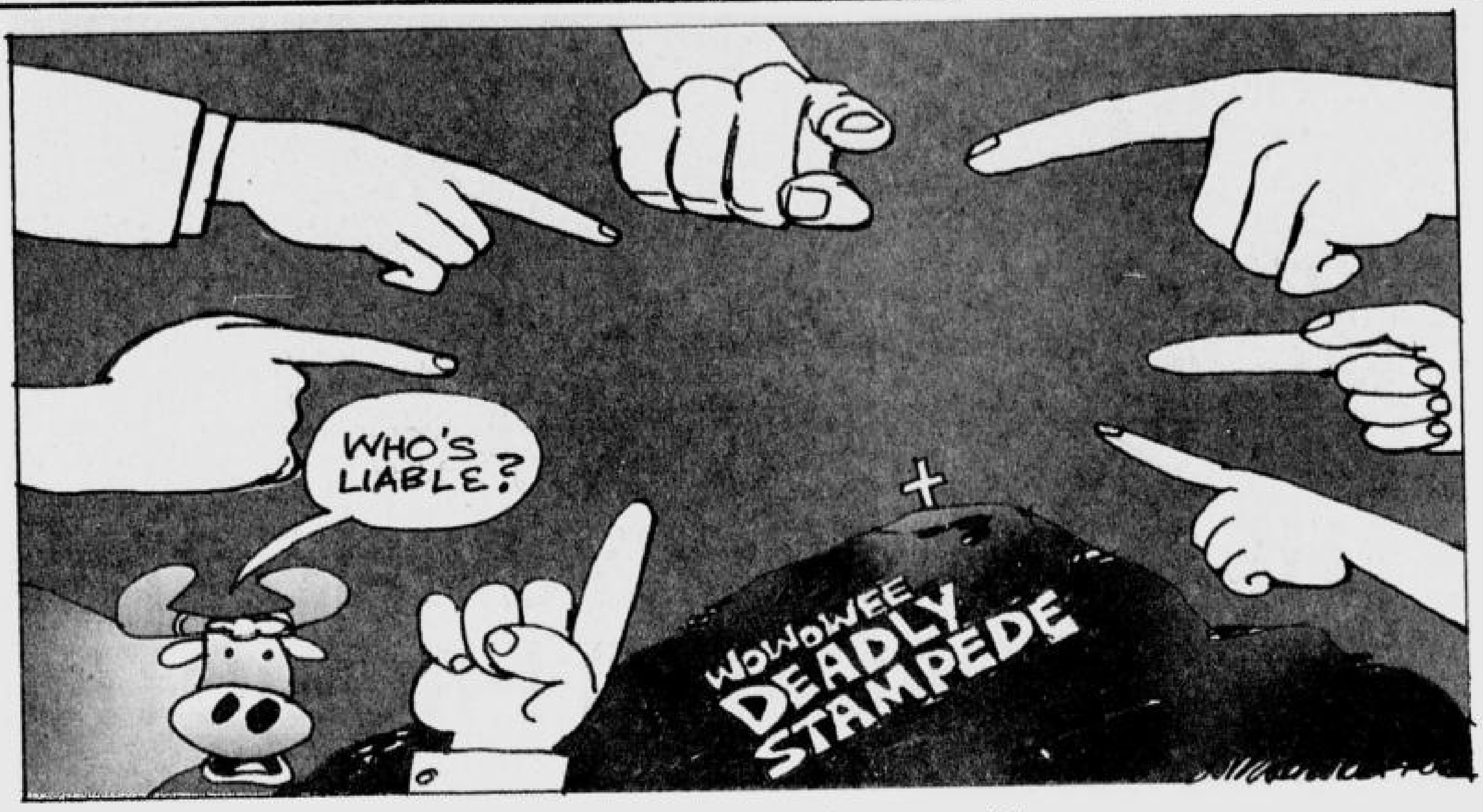
A lot of spade work has already been done by the Senate committee on food and agriculture headed by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. The committee members have been able to ferret out some very damning information that the Ombudsman would find useful if it is really serious about pursuing the case. The committee has the names of the officials who handled the funds and the recipients, as well as Commission on Audit reports showing that the fertilizer was overpriced by 800 percent to 1,200 percent. There are witnesses who have come forward to corroborate the documentary evidence or name those who benefited from the scam and those who were responsible for it. All the Ombudsman has to do is to gather everything and, maybe, follow up some leads, and we may yet see the biggest number of rogues being sent to jail, if not to the death chamber, in a single case.

But it is not just the big number of those involved that makes this case possibly the biggest challenge the Ombudsman will ever face. It is also the personalities involved. Aside from a handful of agriculture officials who disbursed the money, there is a long list of recipients, including 105 members of the House of Representatives, 46 governors and 34 mayors, who may have dipped their dirty fingers into the kitty. Most are holding office and most are supporters of the President. How far will the task force go before they begin asking the President to do all she can to head off the hunt?

And then there is the President, whom the opposition has tagged as the ultimate political beneficiary of the scam. The opposition believes the hundreds of millions of pesos that were not used to buy fertilizers were spent to buy the support of the lawmakers and local officials.

The fertilizer scam is a test case for the Ombudsman and especially its new head Merceditas Gutierrez. Administration critics have always doubted her capacity to stand up to pressure from the Palace, given her closeness to First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo. Her immediate predecessor, the well-respected Simeon Marcelo, is believed to have cut short his tenure in the antigraft agency not only because he was sick physically but also because he was sick of the meddling of people close to the President, particularly Mr. Arroyo. The President's husband was Gutierrez's law school classmate and is reputed to have boosted her career in government. Can she go against the interests of her old college friend as well as the President who has appointed her to several key positions?

It should not take very long before the public gets to know the answer.



Mirror on the wall

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

POLITICAL SPINMASTERS WORK BY A cynical axiom. "Headline deaths," they mutter, "blot out headline crimes." That blankets cruel tragedies—like the Ultra stampede that killed 74, maimed over half a thousand and traumatized a nation.

The smudging of truth is directly proportional to the gore. The higher the body count, spinmasters mutter, the easier to black out scandals elsewhere.

The perversity at Ultra resulted in asphyxiated, stomped-on bodies, mostly of elderly women and children. "After others had fallen and been trampled over, others walked over the corpses to inquire where raffle tickets could be had," columnist Alex Magno notes. Was this a culture unhinged?

"All of us are experts at practicing virtue from a distance," Notre Dame university president Theodore Hesburg writes. In gated enclaves and less affluent places, many cringed from the mirror Ultra thrust into our faces. Did we shape those stark, reflected images? Few could look into the face of a deprived, deluded and—some insist—depraved society. "Mirror, mirror on the wall," the old nursery rhyme ran.

These were preventable deaths. That's clear from the report submitted by the fact-finding "Ultra Task Force" led by Local Government Undersecretary for Public Safety Marius Corpus. Among other things, it found lapses in security, lack of contingency plans, etc. It linked three ABS-CBN officials to these failures. Their names were withheld, pending review by the justice department.

Some comments were scathing: "Offering a few tickets to so many people can be likened to throwing a small piece of meat to a pack of hungry wolves, and this triggered the stampede." Uncalled for, says ABS-CBN television network, which is a no hit-and-run outfit.

"I hold myself accountable should our justice system so determine in the future," Chairman Eugenio Lopez III declared. But "treating people like animals" is not one of the network's flaws, he furiously stressed.

The last thing we need now is petty hectoring. "Malacañang stressed that the probe [was] not payback against the Lopez network giant ABS-CBN which has been critical of the administration," INQUIRER reports. And the local communists predictably issued a knee-jerk reaction: It's all the President's fault. Indeed "No sinners are so intolerant as those who have just turned saints."

Mall managements are now hurriedly reviewing their crowd management manuals. Local governments are updating obsolete laws, etc. But Ultra tossed up issues beyond funeral bills or narrow legal sanctions anchored on outdated laws.

There are broader concerns. Sociologist Michael Tan pinpoints Filipino cultural traits working within widespread poverty: from impatient men dumping chores on elderly women to jumping queues—a trait indulged in equally by the rich. Indeed, the "essence of immorality is the tendency to make an exception of ourselves."

Columnist Manuel Quezon brought to the forefront overlooked studies on crowd safety. Magno skewers the "opiate" buried in television, spurred on by peddlers of shampoo and skin whiteners.

Media must ask the hard questions of itself. So must advertising, which is so linked to the idolatry of ratings and bottom lines. "Television is the first culture available to everyone and entirely governed by what people want," Clive Barnes once wrote. "And the terrifying thing is what people do want."

Do we just pander to what people yell for? Vulnerable to spinmasters, do we substitute trivia for information, cynical comment for hard reporting? The press is "the schoolmaster of the people," we say. But in pursuit of circulation and ratings, do we swap that task and settle for the role of entertainer? Or in the sex-trade's loose jargon: "GROs or Guest Relations Officers"?

What are the consequences of that swap in an impoverished country? Do we haul people, sedated with noon-time-no-brainers, to the poor house, on prime time, insisting it's our (lucrative) duty to help the poor? Has media become, with the ad industry, an opium peddler?

"Broadcasters are no more in the business of pumping a signal into the air or into a cable than newspapers are in the business of delivery trucks," the legislator Adam Clayton Powell pointed out.

What lessons will media and advertising draw from this disaster? Reforms must be adopted, because that's the right thing to do, not because we're leery of clamps from the outside.

This tragedy, meanwhile, shows the spinmasters' axiom work. Headline deaths blotted out equally critical issues: from coup plotters, the opposition leader who bugged Malacañang, to the fertilizer scam and the brewing "compromise agreement" on the coconut levy fund.

Before Ultra, the Senate whittled down the Presidential Commission on Good Government's budget from P67 million to one peso. Reason: PCGG chair Camilo Sabio refused to provide details on a "compromise agreement" on this notorious coco levy kitty.

Yet, the Ultra deaths are a fraction of the thousands sent to premature graves, or beggared, by the levy. But the stampede smudged Sabio's complaint: that Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Franklin Drilon and Edgardo Angara helped craft the extortionate coco levy measure—and, therefore, they have no moral right to sit in judgement.

"It would have been unthinkable for a Claro Recto, Jose Diokno or Lorenzo Tañada to peddle their legal skills for such a measure," the Sun Star said three years back. That issue festers today.

And it shows up in the mirror on the wall. Because those who made Ultra inevitable parade as our "leaders." Indeed, "the greatest way to live with honor in this world," as Socrates insisted, "is to be what we pretend to be."

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

But for the grace of Edsa

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

In past years, GMA has exerted herself to give a bit of fanfare to the celebrations of the two Edsas, the one coming on the heels of the other. Edsa II especially, where she has traditionally preened and advertised herself as its inheritor, if not its author. And Edsa I on the side, to show some gratefulness to Cory and Cardinal Sin without whom she would never have come to power. But this year, nothing. For reasons that are not hard to understand. It doesn't do to trumpet the virtues of ending a tyranny by means of popular revolt, when the thing stands to be repeated in all its fury against you.

Edsa II came and went, and GMA trumpeted only the virtues of Pacquiao. Edsa I is about to come and GMA is trumpeting only the virtues of making *pakyaw* taxation by means of the EVAT. Or at least she did so, until the stampede at Ultra came along to show exactly in what state the people have been reduced to.

But I don't know how far anyone can put a dampener on Edsa I. This end of the month is its 20th anniversary, an event that is sufficiently important to prick the attention of the world. I know that BBC for one has made a radio documentary of the significance of the event. I was one of their interviewees: We had a long conversation about the power of myth in this country, and the mythical theme of good and evil in particular in the two Edsas. But I leave that for the moment. My point simply is that, whether government wants it or not, the 20th anniversary of Edsa is bound to be a riotous event. Who knows? Probably in more ways than one.

Looking back, what lessons does Edsa still have to teach us?

One strange sentiment, but which I've heard even from friends who've gotten bitter and frustrated over the years, is that they're tired of Edsa, Edsa is useless. Some even say they are sorry to have participated in both Edsas. The two Edsas, they say, merely ushered in regimes that proved to be as bad, if not worse, than the tyrannies they replaced.

I can understand the bitterness, but I do not share it. The one lesson the two Edsas have drummed into me is that we are not prescient. We are human beings, we are not gods. We cannot know the future. We can only act according to how we see things today and how we reckon our actions will affect tomorrow. We can only act with our hearts and minds, we can only act with our conscience. That is good enough. We know that abiding tyranny is the next best thing to committing slow-motion suicide. We are compelled by all that we hold dear to end it. The Revolution Bonifacio waged was not useless even if it merely ended in American rule—indeed even if he perished in its fires. The war of liberation the guerrillas fought during the Japanese Occupation was not useless even if it merely restored American rule. It remains a beacon in the darkness to this day, and inspires even if Bataan did fall. If I have to go through another Edsa to stop the bleeding of this country today, I would do so without a second thought. I would welcome it.

There is a corollary to this, however, which is the more important lesson: We are not gods, but we are not fools either. Or shouldn't be. What happens after Edsa is within our power to influence. That is what we have not done. At the end of every Edsa, we are too busy patting ourselves in the back, singing songs about our deeds and anxious to go back to our old lives—like veterans of a bitter campaign to their families—to want to do something about what happens afterward. We are content to leave the spoils to those who would take them, or claim them by right of heroism, and sit back until things get so bad we are compelled to rise to end them all over again. We are not gods but, alas, we are fools.

I remember distinctly that someone wrote me shortly after Edsa II begging me, "cut GMA some slack." She said GMA had just gotten to power, we could all do with ending divisions and uniting behind her. She was just newly married to power and deserved a "honeymoon period." I know when I hear the words "unity" and "reconciliation" that we are headed for trouble. I have become virtually allergic to them.

I wrote back to say politely that I disagreed with that tack. At the very least, I said, I could not sit back and relax when the person who had come to power was someone who, unlike Cory, had distinguished herself by appearing only when the smoke had cleared, and whose inauguration speech singled out the wrong people to thank—chiefly the generals who came at the 11th hour and her cabal of friends, instead of the NGOs, the students, the religious, and the media who first took up the cudgels against Erap. Someone like that did not deserve to be honeymooned, she deserved to be watched. And watched very closely.

At the very most, I said, whatever stuff any beneficiary of Edsa was made of, the point was not to leave them well enough alone, the point was to bring People Power to bear on what they did afterward. People Power wasn't just there to destroy, it was there to build. Cory was made of stern stuff, but look what she did when left well enough alone. Edsa wasn't the end of things, it was the beginning of things. The task of Edsa did not end with the ending of a nightmare, it began with the building of a dream. The point was not to cut the beneficiaries of Edsa some slack, the point was to make sure they did not slacken and build an altar only to themselves.

No, I have not gotten tired of Edsa, I have not gotten cynical about Edsa. It's not so much that I believe in having as many Edsas as it takes to clean up this country. It's that I believe in having an Edsa that will make another Edsa superfluous. Why be tired or cynical about Edsa?

Edsa didn't fail us, we failed Edsa.

On the Cabinet appointments

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LAST SATURDAY MORNING, MY HUSBAND and I went out of Metro Manila with Edmund Lapira, who works with a government-owned corporation and sometimes drives for our family on weekends to earn extra bucks. At about 9 a.m., we heard the news about the Ultra stampede. Edmund turned pale, for early that morning, at 4 a.m. to be specific, his mother and mother-in-law, both in their late 60s, had gone to Ultra for the "Wowowee" celebration, hoping to win some prizes. He immediately tried getting in touch with the two women through their cell phones, but he got no answer. Neither could he contact his wife at home. My husband decided to let Edmund take the vehicle and return to Manila so he could look for them.

Edmund went to various hospitals and funeral parlors, but to no avail. His anxiety growing by the hour, he decided to go home to get photos of the two, thinking they'd come in handy in his search. He found them there, quite shaken but unharmed.

* * *

That drama was repeated in thousands of families last Saturday, and now comes the finding of the inter-agency "Ultra Task Force." I personally don't buy its judgment that ABS-CBN "treated (the fans) like animals." No one wanted that tragedy to happen, least of all the network. But what cannot be denied is that ABS-CBN was guilty of complacency and of poor planning and coordination. Last Saturday's stampede was a tragedy waiting to happen.

* * *

I trust that the government will deal with the network justly. But what ought to be stressed now are the valuable lessons to be learned so that the same tragedy will not happen again. For instance, as columnist Max Soliven noted, it showed how crowd behavior could spin out of control in seconds. My mind goes back to the dispersal a few months ago of street protesters in Mendiola by the police using water canons. The police was roundly criticized for it, but in hindsight it was justified. As NCR Police Director Vidal Querol explained to me then, night was fast falling and there was no telling how agents provocateur would use the cover of darkness to sow violence. Thank God, the demonstrators only got wet and not bullets in their bodies, like the ralliers in the Mendiola massacre in January 1987. Recall, too, how the confrontation between the strikers and lawmen at Hacienda Luisita spun out of control two years ago, amid intense provocation from the leftists, leaving seven people dead.

As we all saw in the Ultra incident, there's a real need for those in authority to understand the dynamics of handling huge crowds. Saturday's episode has also provoked a lot of soul-searching within the giant network. Among those now assiduously doing this is "Wowowee" host Willie Revillame.

* * *

The INQUIRER editorial referred to the recent Cabinet appointments as a form of political "payback." But it is only natural for the President to recruit into her Cabinet those people she is comfortable with and deeply trusts. And all presidents get this sense about people after the latter have rendered long service. In the case of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the need to appoint people who can be trusted became more acute after her unfortunate experience with the Hyatt 10. To my mind, however, what constitutes "payback" is when the appointees do not deserve the appointment at all, but get recruited only because they defended her or did an "operation" for her.

For instance, new Palace legal counsel Eduardo Nachura, a longtime law professor, cannot be put in this category as he's one of the brightest legal minds around. He can easily qualify for a Supreme Court seat. On the other hand, Rep. Ronaldo Puno is a controversial appointment who has little positive value for GMA. With a reputation for backroom operations going back to the two previous administrations, he falls under the category of "non-reformist appointment," as Fr. Archie Intengan termed it and which the bishops insist GMA ought to resist. Also, Secretary Angelo Reyes performed creditably in the DILG. Why transfer him to a field where he would be "a square hole in a round peg"? Not only that, he would have again to go through the Commission on Appointments wringer through which he barely squeezed before? Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago vows to kill Puno's confirmation, owing to the alleged Sulo Hotel operation that she claims cheated her of the presidency in 1992. Why give her the chance to stir trouble, when Reyes wasn't doing badly? What's so special about Puno?

As for Rep. Rolando Andaya at the help of the DBM, there's no doubt he'd do very well as he knows that territory very well. The fear that he would cave in to pressure from his House colleagues is unfounded. My only beef is that his constituents would be deprived of representation. I have consistently objected to the raid of Congress by the Executive because it's not fair to the lawmakers' constituents.

* * *

Trust Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to speak his mind. In Iloilo City, Sen. Manuel Villar recently hosted a dinner for his daughter who reigned as Jaro queen. Among the guests were Gonzalez and Iloilo Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, the new CBCP president, whose pastoral letter had just come out the week before. In his remarks, Gonzalez asked Lagdameo to campaign that all the versions of the "Garci tapes" be deposited with the CBCP, which can then recruit an expert to determine which tape is genuine. Only then, he said, can the nation put to rest the issue of whether GMA cheated or not. Lagdameo said the Church has no such expertise. But Gonzalez insisted, "We're not asking for your expertise. We're only asking that CBCP be the repository of all the tapes, so that expert help can be secured to authenticate them, in the interest of truth." He didn't get a favorable reply.

'Wowowee' Pied Piper-ed the poor

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

HERE ARE SOME OF THE QUOTES I REMEMBER well in the aftermath of the ABS-CBN "Wowowee" stampede that killed more than 70 persons and injured hundreds last Saturday.

"I was not even aware that 'Wowowee' was having its first anniversary."—Gina Lopez, head of ABS-CBN's Bantay Bata Foundation, speaking as guest at ABS-CBN's "Straight Talk with Cito Beltran."

"*Ayan, namatayan ako ng anak.*" (There, now I have lost a child.)—a father, after finding out that his young, only daughter, whom his wife insisted on taking along, was crushed to death.

"*Nagkanya-kanya, basta maka-una lang.*" (It was each man for himself, trying to get ahead.)—Sen. Richard Gordon, head of the Philippine National Red Cross.

"I saw something very wrong, very, very wrong."—Police superintendent Vidal Querol, his voice almost cracking, after he saw people stepping over the dead and clamoring for raffle tickets.

"*Gusto lang namin sila mapasaya.*" (We just wanted to make them happy.)—"Wowowee" host Willie Revillame.

"Even with all the dead around, many people were still asking for raffle tickets."—a paraphrase of what TV producer Marilou Almaden told the fact-finding committee investigating the tragedy.

Sure, there was a lot of compassion and generosity that burst out of people's hearts after the tragedy, but before that, the worst had to take center stage. And the worst thing of all was that this had to happen among the mostly poor and the innocents who were there for the thrill.

Watching the fact-finding committee's investigation, I couldn't help noticing that the line of questioning focused mainly on where, when and how the tragedy happened, the security lapses, the physical layout of the place, the numbers. It was all about crowd control.

No one was asking about the nature and essence of the "Wowowee" show, its history, purpose, sponsors, audience. Did the show even remotely realize that it was playing Pied Pier and might be leading innocents to a tragic end? For the investigators, it seemed enough that they knew that it was some kind of a daily game show that raffled off oodles of prizes in cash and in kind.

If a Senate hearing is going to be conducted "in aid of legislation," I hope the parties concerned would look into the nature of TV shows. This is not in order to curtail media freedom, but to protect the interest of viewers and the live participating public.

For TV networks, it is no longer just a ratings game. It is also a crowd-drawing game, with the crowd size, queue length and shrieking decibel used as gauge of the affair's popularity, the better for advertisers to notice. And who to draw in to the queue if not the *masa*? They who have simple dreams and simple joys, they who seek momentary relief from life's travails, so easy to please, so easy to satisfy.

But must poverty always be the scapegoat? Those who keep pointing to the people's poverty and nothing else as the cause of tragedies, such as this recent one, are also using the poor. They are not very different from those who use and entertain the poor for marketing gimmicks. It's as if the poor have nothing else except their hunger, not unlike infants that must be made to thrive on baby food. To underestimate the poor is to sin against the poor.

Sure, many survivors of the tragedy who were interviewed pointed to their poverty and hopelessness as having pushed them to try their luck in "Wowowee." But of course, because there was a creation named "Wowowee." Remember the saying from the movie "Field of Dreams"—"If you build it they will come." And so they came, like innocents marching to the mesmerizing music of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

But what made the "Wowowee" crowd different from a Pied Piper-ed throng was that when the crunch came, the throng did not act as one organic mob. It was—as Gordon said—each one for him/herself. Survival of the fittest. But this was not even about survival, as in, say, a sinking overloaded ship (which the Philippines has had lots of). This was about getting ahead of the other person, of getting first crack at the raffle tickets that might not even turn out to be lucky ones. Even as bodies lay limp and lifeless. Even as screams of pain were being heard. This was the ugliest thing that emerged from this much-invoked, over-blamed poverty. Blame poverty? Blame the money a rich network wanted to throw in order to make more money and higher ratings for themselves.

You have to know the nature of the crowd, Querol kept stressing. The Pope's visit, the SEA games, Pacquiao's homecoming, mammoth protest rallies, the Black Nazarene procession—each one is a security nightmare unto itself. You make a master plan for contingencies—earthquakes, cyclones, bomb threats, hostage crises, among them.

ABS-CBN's Bantay Bata (which works for the welfare of children as well as tax deduction for the Lopezes) should have known about the presence of children in the "Wowowee" throng. ABS-CBN might pay much in taxes, but this did not mean the police would have to baby-sit their guests for several days. The police were expected to call the shots when the crowd ballooned to 30,000 just before the stampede at the gate. And don't expect security guards to learn crowd control right there and then. There has to be planning and coordination. Sadly…

There will be a lot of blame-throwing in the days ahead. It behooves those whose money-making job it was to work up the crowd, to listen and not project the *pa-awa* feeling that the entire weight of the tragedy is being hurled on them for their destruction. They should be brave and take some on the chin.

The best lessons are the most painful.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Faith, not fear

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

TWO SURPRISING QUESTIONS HAVE CONfronted me lately, both asked by readers I ran into in social occasions. The first question is, do I regret my column last July, in which I expressed my belief that President Macapagal-Arroyo should resign and that far-sweeping changes are necessary? I do not. "But you were hyperventilating about a mere actress," they say, citing my comparing Ms Arroyo to Susan Roces. I must say: Susan Roces has done nothing to shame either herself or the country up to now.

But beyond comparing personalities, I do believe we must remain in a state of perpetual dissatisfaction with what we have now. I have always borne in mind the memoirs of an American communist, Sol Auerbach, who recounted having asked Manuel L. Quezon about the secret behind his tremendous political success. Quezon's answer surprised the communist: "He answered without hesitation, 'I always realized that power rests in the masses.'" The American then went on to recount the candid thoughts of the Filipino leader: "Not that he thought much of democracy, either in its formal aspect or in its essence, he was quick to add. The country had never been democratic, he explained, nor was it now democratic despite the pretensions of the Constitution and the Commonwealth setup. Only few know what democracy is, he continued, and these are disgruntled individuals like the young writers of Manila and some leaders of the Popular Alliance. He had postponed the first local elections to be held under the Commonwealth, and I wanted to know why. Elections mean nothing, he said, since they are controlled by the landed rich and the *cacique*."

Democracy is our national ideal; but its past and present conditions have always left much to be desired. Instead of perfecting it, we have abused and debased it. The least we can do is achieve the democracy of the past; the best we should hope to do is have a society at least marginally more democratic than the one that existed before we were born. I happen to think we should be secure enough in the efforts of past generations to realize we can improve on their work.

The second question is, doesn't my support for constitutionalism and my love for history contradict my belief that wide-ranging changes are required? I see no contradiction between giving the existing constitutional order every chance to heal itself (and keep itself relevant) and the need to keep pressing forward, so that if the system proves itself incapable of reform, then at least a preparatory debate has taken place for more radical changes.

To remain stuck is to invite disaster. This realization is nothing new. In the same memoir, the American communist recounts Quezon explaining in 1937 that he wanted to set up institutions such as the National Rice and Corn Corp. (today's National Food Authority). Quezon went on to tell the American something that remains relevant to this day: "For the rest, he was engaged in solving the problem in his own way—by putting the fear of the masses into the hearts of the wealthy land barons. 'I tell them, if you know what's good for you, better improve the conditions of your tenants. You do not have enough sons for the army, so we must conscript our soldiers from the poor. We put guns in their hands and teach them how to use them. If you are not careful, they will use those guns against you. If you want to save what you have, give them ten percent of it or they will take it all.'"

That was true in 1937, it is true today—the situation made worse because of three generations of delayed reforms. Instead of faith, we have fear—so much of it, and from which I myself often suffer—of rebels, of revolutionaries, of those not from the status quo. A passage from Leon Ma. Guerrero always reminds me to resist those fears. In trying to explain why Ms Aurora Quezon was killed by peasants when she had tried so hard to help them, Guerrero wrote, "People who ask this have never been hunted. They have never starved and shivered in hiding. They have never felt that the hand of every man was turned against them. But the outcasts of society, or those society has made outcasts, no longer recognize any duties to it. Humanity is their enemy. All those who have homes while they lack a roof over their heads; who have food on their tables while they must pick the fruits and berries of the forest; who have clothes on their backs while their own rags are torn in the underbrush; who can sleep secure while they must start with panic at the sound of every twig breaking in the night—all those are their enemies. And they wait for a time when they can hit back, briefly, blindly, but enough to suit their wild envy and humbled pride; they watch the laborers clearing the winding road; they watch the bright banners of welcome waving in the forbidden towns—an enemy comes, one of the happy and secure—they watch the long rich plumes of dust sweeping across the gorges from the road, their hand is eager on the smooth barrel of the gun, one more chance to get back at them, no matter who, no matter if the gentle lady in the official car is a friend, for they have no friends, and so they press the trigger."

The danger of the present situation is that it is establishing the law of the jungle as the supreme law; dog-eat-dog becomes a substitute for the rule of law. And if such is our poor excuse for law, then away with the law! We can surely do better; we can surely take a step toward being a national community again, instead of being an isolated, atomized people living in fear, hatred and suspicion—turning our eyes away from those who beg, or worse, simply seeing right through them, comforting ourselves with thoughts of escaping to where the law belongs, and applies, to all.

My colorful lab life

YOUNG BLOOD

Bernadette Rhodes S. Ciudad

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I AM AT MY WITS' END. IT IS LESS THAN THREE MONTHS before my final paper is due, two months before my defense and three months before my scheduled graduation. And to make matters more nerve-racking, I am still in the preparatory phase of my experimentation.

I have not anticipated that a sackful of *gulaman* (red seaweed) would shrink to a handful when dried. After three months of hauling bags of *gulaman* and being the object of criticisms from people who demanded to know "What's that smell?" I finally have my *gulaman* dried, ground and packed. I'm now ready to proceed to my experiment. But why does the supply of acids, vials, flasks and gas have to run out now of all times?

To be sick in these times is a nightmare. And it is a nightmare I'm experiencing now. It seems that the more I strive to meet the deadline, the more the problems I encounter.

But it isn't just me who is complaining. It is the entire student body taking Chemistry laboratory subjects who are suffering because the government doesn't have enough funds to support our eager pursuit of knowledge.

My entire laboratory life, which consists of more than 26 units, has been punctuated by improvisations, substitutions and eliminations because the materials we need are unavailable while those that are at hand are either obsolete, broken or limited in quantity.

I can recall many instances when the whole class would run out of the lab screaming or panting for breath after the laboratory was filled with fumes of a life-threatening substance due to a broken fume hood or a broken exhaust fan which left us the job of sucking the fumes ourselves.

I can still recall one hilarious occasion when my instructor, in sudden panic, hurled his wet lab gown on top of a broken fume hood to stop the fumes from spreading. His effort went for naught and all he earned was a lot of ribbing from us, prompting him to walk out of our class in embarrassment. Before doing so, he had hurled the gown in some place where it was quickly forgotten. And it was only recently that it was discovered in its hiding place, already discolored and totally unusable.

I have also been the recipient of electric shock brought about by my own carelessness and the wiring of the exhaust fan that has been gnawed by mice. Friendships have also been tested and some suffered in the competition to get hold of a limited number of equipment. Now I know who among my classmates are selfish jerks who hoard all the glassware and apparatuses as well as those who are generous enough to share their use.

I have been an eyewitness to the parasitism and demonstrations of the crab mentality of my colleagues as well as my own. The parasitism manifests itself when we "forget" to buy detergents, rubber tubing, matches, wash bottles, tissue papers, test tube brushes, sponges and filter papers because aside from adding to our expenses, we can be sure that the supplies for our personal use would end up as supplies for the whole class. The crab mentality comes to the fore when we see other groups moving ahead of us in any of our experiments.

I feel ashamed to confess that I also succumbed to such weaknesses. But that was then. And now it's just me and the long stretch before graduation. I barely have time to think of my classmates' theses since I am too preoccupied with my own. I envy those students who will graduate without going through what I am undergoing now. I struggle to keep my head afloat in the ocean of things that I have to do because I still have several demanding subjects plus one back subject (my second take) on top of my thesis. My resources are almost depleted and so is my hope.

But as I look at the younger chemist-wannabes, a surge of pride runs through me. For they look up with awe to us seniors who have come this far.

Looking at the younger students coughing, almost choking at the fumes and fighting over the hot plates, I get misty-eyed to realize that I was not alone in this crazy world. I once was where they are now. I have survived almost four years of this mayhem, and certainly I can survive another three months. I feel my hope becoming stronger as I draw nearer to my goal. The younger students look up to me, and I cannot disappoint them. And I will not do so.

Bernadette Rhodes S. Ciudad, 21, is a BS Chemistry senior at the University of the Philippines in the Visayas, Miagao Campus.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been pr usly published.

THEY SAID

Undelivered justice

"You know judges are supposed to deliver justice to the people, but when injustice is committed against judges, it's very important that justice be given to them, otherwise how can the judges be expected to give justice to the people if justice to them is not attended to."

—Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, proposing the creation of a special unit of law enforcers to protect and investigate the murders of judges, after the killing of trial court judge Henrick Gingoyon

Outplaying mediocrity

"Now you don't have to have great skills to score well. You only have to have the right equipment."

—Bowling great Bong Coo lamenting that high-end equipment have made great bowlers out of mediocre ones

Upright

"The country cannot afford to be without an upright Supreme Court."

—Sen. Joker Arroyo saying the country is "fortunate and safe" with Artemio Panganiban as new chief justice

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EVAT instead of bread

UPON IMPLEMENTING THE 12-PERCENT vat, the Arroyo administration asked the people to bear the "sacrifice" necessary to achieve long-term gains.

For decades, the biggest sacrifices, economic or political, have always been borne by the people. Those who are occupying Malacañang are not the ones who go hungry; they do not become the victims of mass lay-off, and they are not the ones who get evicted from their homes. They are not the ones who jump off bridges or poison their children because they don't know where to scrounge for food for their family's next meal. No, Ms Arroyo and the staunch defenders of EVAT are not the ones who suffer the dehumanizing conditions of poverty, it is the majority of the people.

How could they muster the guts to tell the people to make one more sacrifice? If there is anyone who needs to make that ultimate sacrifice, it is the one occupying the loftiest seat in Malacañang.

After all, it is during her term that the country is suffering the worst financial crisis. During her term, the country registered the highest budget deficit. During her term, the most scandalous corruption cases unraveled and the worst electoral fraud in Philippine history was committed. The people have sacrificed more than enough and they are being called upon to sacrifice more for the benefit of a selfish queen, opportunistic politicians and the greedy capitalists, all of whom stand to gain from the EVAT and splurge with its proceeds.

Imposing the EVAT is like feeding clay to the mass of hungry, tired, jobless, homeless people who are crying for bread.

—LORNA MARANGIT,
Liga ng Kabataang Moro-Montalban Rizal, (League of Moro Youth),
Kasiglahan Village, Rodriguez, Rizal

Misplaced Pasay terminal

I'D LIKE TO COMMEND PASAY CITY'S beautification project, which included the installation of colored and decorative streetlights along Roxas Boulevard, specifically from Vito Cruz Street to Russel Street. The project is certainly most welcome, especially because the boulevard is the main road leading to and from the international airport. If the government is to impress visiting dignitaries, I would say a "face-lift" of Roxas Boulevard is the most effective way of doing so.

But if you're among those who regularly go to Baclaran church every Wednesday (when thousands of devotees flock to it), you wouldn't fail to notice the service road a few hundred meters from the corner of Heritage Hotel. Some unscrupulous individuals have turned a stretch of that road, fronting the Bank of Commerce and Metrobank, into a public terminal for jeeps and buses. The place has become such an eyesore that it takes away whatever Pasay City gained from its beautification project. Not only that, the place has also become a nightmare for motorists.

Did the city council of Pasay hold a public hearing on the conversion of that service road into a terminal for public utility vehicles? If I remember right, the place started to be used as a terminal way back in 2000. I wonder how many thousands of pesos are realized monthly from the operation of the terminal and who profits from it?

The location of this terminal is certainly not ideal and I wonder if the city government of Pasay has considered transferring it in view of its beautification program. Otherwise, the beautification program will just be cosmetic.

—ANNABELLE RAMIREZ,
Pasay City,
an_ram58@yahoo.com.ph

Pension-less veterans

WE ARE VETERANS AND BENEFICIARIES of veterans who have not received our pensions since 1999. We are always told to wait for the release of our pensions but six years of waiting is too long and exhausting.

Is there an allocation in the 2006 national budget for this purpose?

—EILEEN GAYAMAT TRAYA,
egtraya@yahoo.com

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Forgotten meaning and power of politics

I'M NEITHER ADVOCATING A SHIFT TO a new system of government nor questioning the proposal for such a shift. What concerns me more is the "moral credentials" of our political leaders. For change in the form of our government will be a waste of time and money if our leaders can't make the sacrifice of completely setting aside their political ambitions.

The poor don't care whether we have a government that is presidential, parliamentary, unicameral, bicameral, federal or whatever. They can't afford to do so. Their priority is to find something to eat to keep themselves and their families alive.

All I'm saying is it's useless to make so much fuss out of the proposed shift to parliamentary system. We should rather attend to the fundamental problem of this nation, and it is not corruption in our government but the apparent death of morality in our political system.

Have we forgotten our moral values? Or have we not learned something from our school and from our elders? Are our moral foundations still strong?

Why do people want to be in politics? Politicians are public servants. As such, they are supposed to serve. But why is it that many of our public servants don't seem to be aware of this?

It's time for us, Filipinos, to reformulate our concept of politics. Politics is public service. Politics is the power to transform this nation. I still believe in this country. I still believe in a few genuine public servants.

—ROGER A. ABITRIA IV,
BS Applied Physics, University of the Philippines-Los Baños

Dog pound in Makati

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE JAN. 30 column of Neal Cruz. Contrary to what he said, Makati City has a dog pound. This has been in existence since 1986. And from the time I was employed by the city almost 10 years ago as one of its veterinarians, I have been supervising and managing this facility for dogs.

Through the years, we have introduced a lot of improvement in our impounding facility. We have elevated slats in every cage. And each of this cage is now reinforced with plastic matting. We have also equipped these cells with automatic "water dispensers." And we have been providing for the needs of the impounded dogs.

We are fully aware of the Animal Welfare Act of 1998. As a matter of fact, we have adopted some of its provisions in our ordinance on animal regulation and control, which promotes responsible pet ownership in Makati City.

Our office, the Veterinary Services Office, is implementing several programs promoting animal welfare, and Mayor Hon. Jejomar C. Binay is very supportive of these programs, some of which are: the anti-rabies mass vaccination campaign, education campaign in the different schools, neutering program which promotes dog population control, and veterinary services extended to pet owners in the city. Furthermore, we work hand-in-hand with Cara (which Cruz mentioned as the sole animal welfare society that gives attention to native dogs).

—MA. VIVIEN C. MANALASTAS, DVM,
veterinarian, Makati City,
pinkycm13@yahoo.com

Dreaming in the English language

PAU FONTANOS (YOUNG BLOOD, PDI, 1/28/06) needs a reality check very badly, like our country needs the thousands of jobs that our thousands of unemployed do. Perhaps, Fontanos has not yet tried applying with a decent company in Makati or Ortigas, etc. If he had, he would have found out that the interview is almost always conducted in English, never in Pilipino.

Alas, the applicant cannot choose the language he is to be interviewed in. I am, therefore, saying, yes, by all means, let us bring back English as our primary medium of instruction from grade school up.

There are more opportunities open to those who are proficient with the language, and Fontanos should know this. And he asks the question: What's the language in our students' dream? Why, it is English, of course!

—ED VALENCIANO,
enzovalen@hotmail.com

US' sense of justice under trial in Subic rape case

WE, OF THE BUKLURAN NG MANGGAGAWANG Pilipino-Kababaihan, are enraged by the United States' arrogance and refusal to surrender the four American military rapists! A crime has been committed and justice is required.

If the US Embassy honestly want to see that justice is served—which we doubt—then they should start by turning over the custody of the four rape suspects to Philippine authorities.

The Bush government professes itself as a defender of human rights in the world, but in fact it becomes the worst violator whenever US supremacy is in question.

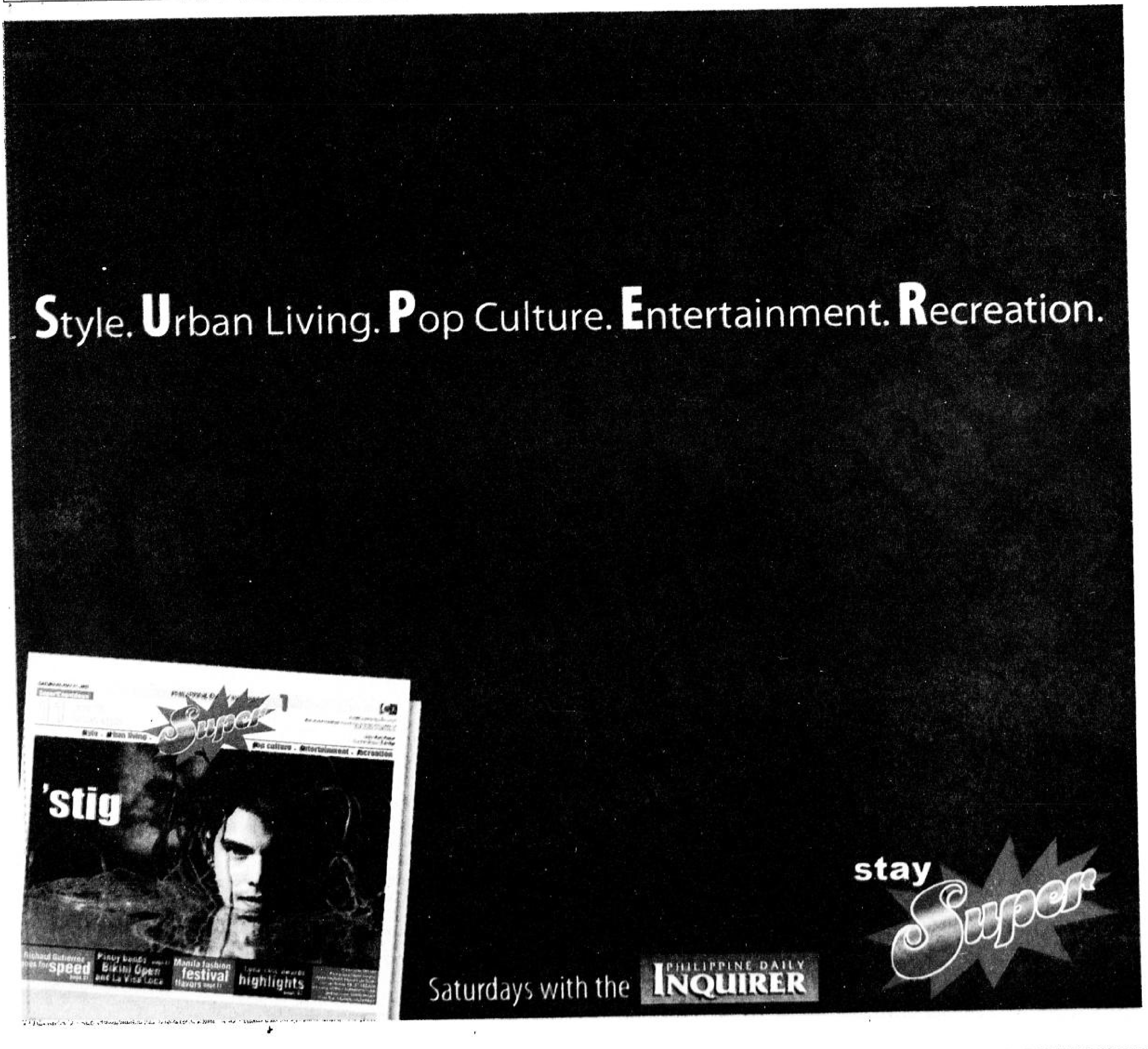
For decades, the United States has been raping our country's economy and continuously committing the most heinous crime against our women. Remember the Balangiga massacre?

The custody issue is a legal and a political question. And the United States' refusal to surrender the rape suspects adds to the historical injustices it committed against our country and our people. It's only just to cut our ties with a country that has no respect for the dignity of our women and our laws.

We should not allow the use of the Visiting Forces Agreement to evade justice. VFA should be abrogated. So must all agreements, treaties, etc. with other countries, which are not favorable to our interests and contravene our country's laws and sovereignty as a nation.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez should be ousted for their failure to protect Filipino women and to provide them with justice.

—MICHELLE CAÑOS,
national coordinator, Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino-Kababaihan,
63 Unribia St., Barangay Marilag,
Project 4, Quezon City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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

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'We won the biggest prize—our lives'

By Marlon Ramos
Santa Rosa City

THREE DAYS AFTER the stampede that killed 74 people at the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra) in Pasig City on Saturday, a scene continues to haunt Eduardo Maliwat, a jobless father of three.

An elderly woman clung to his right leg begging for help. "Toto, *tulungan mo naman ako* (Son, please help me)," he quoted her as saying.

As much as he wanted to, Maliwat said he could not help her for he was carrying his 4-year-old son on his shoulders. "If I helped the old woman, my son could have died because I would have lost my balance. It was just a regrettable incident."

Maliwat, 44, of Barangay Tagapo, Santa Rosa City in Laguna, learned later that the woman eventually died after being trampled on the concrete walkway.

For the past two nights, he said, the scene roused him from sleep. "I just want to say sorry to the family of that old lady. I just chose to save my son instead of her."

Looking back at the tragedy, Maliwat said coming home in one piece was the biggest prize they won.

"What is important is that we all came home alive. We just won the biggest prize at stake—our lives," he said as he ate lunch of rice and *sinigang na plapla* that day.

Maliwat and his family believed that last weekend's incident also brought out the best in Filipinos.

SOME stampede survivors, like the Maliwats and Presbiteros of Santa Rosa City in Laguna, say love for family was the reason they went to the PhilSports Arena during the first anniversary show of "Wowowee."
MARLON RAMOS

"The people who went to Ultra were mostly poor people like us. Despite their poverty, none took advantage of the others. If they wanted to, they could just have picked up the wallets and cell phones that were strewn all over the pavement," his wife Elvie said.

"Those who were not gravely hurt helped the others who were unable to stand," added Elvie, her body still sore after the mad rush.

She admitted that before and during the stampede, the people were like "hungry foxes running after a single chicken."

"Nobody listened to our pleas. They seemed to be deaf. I was already crying and telling the people behind me to stop pushing, but they didn't seem to hear what I was saying," she lamented.

Elvie, just like the rest who lined up for the first anniversary of the game show "Wowowee," had hoped that she and any of her seven relatives with her would win prizes in the raffle.

She and her husband are both jobless. Their children are aged 4, 20 and 24.

They live in the house of their son-in-law Jon-jon Presbitero, whose family occupies one of six dwellings inside the cramped, dimly lit and unpaved compound in Tiongco Subdivision.

Instead of bringing home prizes, they almost got crushed to death in the stampede.

In fact, Elvie's sister-in-law, Susan Presbitero, was earlier listed as among the casualties of the tragedy. She survived the stampede and is now recuperating from sore legs and bruises in the body.

Elvie, as it turned out, mistook a woman's cadaver as that of Susan. She said she still could not believe how her five-foot frame was able to escape from the madding crowd and cheated death.

The Maliwats said the unfortunate event made them closer and appreciate one another even more.

Eduardo said he saw how his son-in-law Jon-jon helped over a dozen people, mostly old women, trapped in the pile of falling people.

"I am really proud of what he did. He's a hero," Eduardo said.

Jon-jon, 28, said that after ensuring that his wife and parents were safe, he immediately proceeded to assist those who were underfoot.

By his reckoning, he was able to help over a dozen injured get back on their feet.

"I never thought of myself. It just occurred to me that I have to do something to save others, especially the old women," he said. He lost his shoes during the commotion and went home barefooted.

Jon-jon said he was saddened by reports that pinned the blame on comic host Willie Revillame and the ABS-CBN management for the tragedy.

He said Revillame should not be held liable, but the security guards.

Some of the guards in the area, he said, were laughing as the people pushed and shoved to get their tickets at the entrance gate.

"There were clearly lapses in security. But the negligence of the security guards made it worse. Instead of helping us and ensuring order, they just laughed at the crowd," he said.

Other family members supported Jon-jon's claims. They said the security guards even sold free meals at P20 each and the supposed free bottled water at P5 apiece.

After what happened to them, the family said they had only one request that they hoped the management of ABS-CBN would grant them.

"Maybe they (the management) would give us and the others who were injured the chance to play and win in the show. After all, we risked our lives just to be there," Eduardo said.

Elvie, on the other hand, said she hoped that the government and the network will give poor people like them the opportunity to have decent jobs or a small capital to start a small business.

"*Kung may trabaho kami at kabuhayan, hindi na kami pipila pa at magsusugal ng aming buhay sa mga* game show *tulad ng* Wowowee (If we have jobs, we would not have been in that queue and risking our lives for a chance to join a game show like Wowowee)," she said.

Ex-rebels now 'butanding' guardians

By Gil Francis G. Arevalo
Donsol, Sorsogon

FOR 16 YEARS, VIDER PADILLA was a guerrilla of the communist New People's Army. Concern for his family's safety and future, however, forced him to leave the group and return home one day in 1997.

He could not find a job as he bore the stigma of being a former rebel. He knew of only one way to feed his five children—fishing—but hedged on employing illegal methods like many other fishermen did.

So when the municipal government asked him to join the Donsol Bantay Dagat in 1998 to check rampant illegal fishing, he did not think twice. Besides, he could not abandon his desire to be of help to the community.

At first, Padilla did not know that the group's other duty was guarding "at all costs" the giant gentle fish *butanding* or whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) off the coastal town.

"Only a few people told me that one of the reasons the local government formed Bantay Dagat was to protect this very big fish, which was then threatened by rampant killing," Vider said.

Thus, in the same year, he became a member of the Butanding Operators Association (BOA) when it was organized, together with the Butanding Interaction Officers (BIO).

His first encounter with the whale shark made a lasting impact on him and inspired him to be a more determined and friendly guardian of the sea.

The creature, which can grow as long as 18 meters and live up to 100 years, continues to fascinate him.

"Although I've been working as a boat operator and sometimes, as a *butanding* interactor, for many tourists for eight years now, I'm still amazed every time I see or closely interact with it," he said.

"Its friendliness is awesome," he said. "It will inspire you to be friendlier. It really radiates some aura with the way it sways its fins and no one can describe the delight tourists have, especially those who are able to see more than 10 whale sharks in a day."

Like the 60 other members of the BOA and BIO, Padilla said that if not for the presence of the whale sharks, Donsol would have remained very poor and they would never have a chance to support their families.

His two brothers, Elisis and Siriaco, are also active members of the BOA. Both are also former NPA members back in the early '80s.

At least 16 former rebels are now active members of the BOAs and BIOs in Donsol, according to municipal tourism coordinator Salvador Adrao Jr.

Donsol, situated at the northwestern part of Sorsogon, is a fifth-class municipality (average annual income: P7 million-P13 million) and ranks 76th in terms of poverty among municipalities in Bicol.

A 51-km travel from Albay's capital city of Legazpi, Donsol has become world-famous after the "rediscovery" of the *butanding* in 1998. It has constantly attracted tourists from Germany, the United States, Australia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and other Asian countries.

Regional tourism director Maria "Nini" Ravanilla said most BIOs were very articulate and knowledgeable in dealing with the tourists.

"This is why they are at the frontline whenever there are visitors," she said.

The success of the *butanding* interaction industry, through the strict watch of Bantay Dagat and the assistance of the BOAs and the BIOs, has made the local residents more aware of the urgent need to protect the gentle giant fish.

Though most of the BOAs and BIOs are employed from December up to May, Padilla said his companions felt overwhelmed by the fact that many tourists continued to seek out their "treasure."

Invitation to Bid
Lot Sale "AS IS WHERE IS"
(Lot 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
on 3-wheeler and motorcycle units.
Interested parties are invited to send their sealed bids **until February 28, 2006.**
All items are available for viewing at
Bldg. No. 3, Balagtas St.,
Chrysanthenium Village,
San Pedro, Laguna
Opening of sealed bid is on February 28, 2006 at 4:00 p.m.
For inquiry, please call:
Tel. No. 868-5042 / 808-0272

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health – EASTERN VISAYAS
Government Center, Palo, Leyte
www.chd8.doh.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a loan from The JAPAN BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (JBIC), toward the cost for the **Help for Catubig Agricultural Advancement Project (HCAAP)** and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payment for goods and supplies and materials and equipment for the project.
2. The DOH-Eastern Visayas, now invites sealed bids for eligible Bidders for the following goods and supplies, categorized by lot, as follows:

   I. Office Supplies, II. Malacological Materials – Field Use, III. Malacological Materials – Laboratory Use & Diagnostic Materials – Field Use, IV. Chemicals for Snails Control V. Diagnostic Aid. VI. Vehicles & Spare Parts, VII. Motorcycles, VIII. Computers and their Collaterals, IX. Communication & Office Equipment, X. Appliances, XI. Microscopes and their Collaterals, XII. Minor Tools for Vehicles and Minor Tools for Field Use, XII. IEC Materials.
3. Bidding will be conducted through national competitive bidding procedures specified in the Japan Bank for International Cooperation's local competitive bidding procedures and is open to all bidders from eligible countries as defined in *Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC ODA Loans*."
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Chairperson, DOH-Eastern Visayas at the address given below and inspect the Bidding Documents during office hours.
5. The DOH-Eastern will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on **March 6, 2006 at 2:00 PM** at the DOH Eastern Visayas Conference Room.
6. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested eligible bidder on the submission of a written application to the above address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) for each lot. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below at or before 2:00 PM on **March 24, 2007**. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than **two percent (2%)** of the Total Bid Price in Philippine currency in the form of cash or Manager's check or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be opened on March 24, 2006 at 2:00 PM at the DOH-Eastern Visayas Conference room. Bids shall be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
9. Price quotations shall be by lot and not for individual items.
10. The Department of Health – Eastern Visayas reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

For further details you may contact the **Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee** at Tel. No. 323-5044 or the **BAC Secretary** at Tel. No. 323-5025 during office hours. Please visit the DOH-EV Website (www.chd8.doh.gov.ph) for a complete listing of the goods and supplies to be procured.

(Sgd.) **PAULA PAZ M. SYDIONGCO, M.D., M.P.H.**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(Sgd.) **BENITA NAVARES-PASTOR, M.D., M.H.A.**
Director IV
Head, Procuring Entity

(PDI–Feb. 9 & 16, 2006)

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED MERCHANTS RURAL BANK OF TALAVERA (NUEVA ECIJA), INC.

1. Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 98 dated January 26, 2006 ordering the closure of the Merchants Rural Bank of Talavera (Nueva Ecija), Inc. (MRBTI), the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) will start its operations for the servicing of claims for insured deposits in the closed MRBTI on Friday, February 3, 2006.
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the following payout sites where they can file their claims with the PDIC representatives during office hours (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM), from Monday to Friday, except holidays.

MRBTI Office/ Branch	*Payout Site/ Address*	*Duration of Initial Operations*
Head Office (Sta. Rosa)	Cojuangco, Maharlika Highway, Sta. Rosa, N.E.	Feb. 3, 2006 to March 1, 2006
Cabanatuan Branch	Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija (N.E.)	Feb. 3, 2006 to Feb. 21, 2006
Cabiao Branch	San Juan North, Nueva Ecija	Feb. 3, 2006 to Feb. 17, 2006
Gapan Branch	City of Gapan, N.E.	Feb. 3, 2006 to Feb. 14, 2006
Muñoz Branch	T. Delos Santos St., Science City of Muñoz, N.E.	Feb. 3, 2006 to Feb. 17, 2006
San Jose Branch	San Jose City, Nueva Ecija	Feb. 3, 2006 to Feb. 14, 2006
Talavera Branch	Maharlika Highway, Poblacion, Talavera, N.E.	Feb. 3, 2006 to Feb. 17, 2006
Zaragoza Branch	Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija	Feb. 3, 2006 to Feb. 21, 2006

After the said date, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6th Floor, SSS BLDG, Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. or by mail to:

The Manager
Claims Processing Department
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
2228 Chino Roces Avenue
1231 Makati City

3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook, Certificate of Time Deposit, or Bank Statement including Unused Checks.
   b. Two (2) latest valid identification cards/documents (IDs) with depositor's signature.

   Other documents may be required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
4. Pursuant to the provision of R.A. 3591, as amended by R.A. 9302, the last day for filing claims for insured deposits in the closed Merchants Rural Bank of Talavera Inc., is on **January 28, 2008**. After January 28, 2008, PDIC, as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI – February 2, 9 & 16, 2006)

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF TANGALAN (AKLAN), INC.

1. Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 97 dated January 26, 2006 ordering the closure of the Rural Bank of Tangalan (Aklan), Inc. (RBTI), the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) will start its operations for the servicing of claims for insured deposits in the closed RBTI on Friday, February 3, 2006.
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the following payout sites where they can file their claims with the PDIC representatives during office hours (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM), from Monday to Friday, except holidays.

RBTI Office/ Branch	*Payout Site/ Address*	*Duration of Initial Operations*
Head Office	Tangalan, Aklan , West. Visayas	Feb. 3, 2006 to Feb. 17, 2006
Sigma Branch	Sigma, Capiz, West. Visayas	Feb. 3, 2006 to Feb. 24, 2006

After the said date, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6th Floor, SSS BLDG, Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. or by mail to:

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   b. Two (2) latest valid identification cards/documents (IDs) with depositor's signature.

   Other documents may be required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
4. Pursuant to the provision of R.A. 3591, as amended by R.A. 9302, the last day for filing claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Tangalan (Aklan) Inc., is on **January 28, 2008**. After January 28, 2008, PDIC, as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI – February 2, 9 & 16, 2006)

A16 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2006

Across the NATION

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Room 201, Bonuan Apartelle
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Fax No. (074)443-8971
E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

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Peace with MILF near, say negotiators

KUALA LUMPUR—THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT and Moro separatist rebel negotiators said Tuesday they had reached a preliminary deal on the controversial issue of ancestral lands.

Two days of preliminary peace talks in Malaysia ended with both parties "successfully wrapping up the consensus points of the ancestral domain issue," negotiators from the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front said in a joint statement from the southern resort of Port Dickson.

"The ancestral domain agreement may be signed by late March 2006, simultaneously with the inception of the formal talks," they said.

The parties had agreed to determine the scope of the Moro homeland based on technical maps and data submitted by both parties, it said.

They settled on measures to address "the legitimate grievances" of the Moro people "arising from the unjust dispossession and/or marginalization" and "their right to use and develop their ancestral domain and ancestral lands."

They also reached agreement on economic cooperation, said the statement.

Silvestre Afable, who led the Philippine government delegation, was quoted as saying by the official Bernama news agency that the Philippine government was committed to achieving peace and "very happy that the MILF had responded with seriousness and commitment."

He predicted that they would reach their goal sooner than expected.

MILF delegation leader Mohagher Iqbal said their hope of achieving a comprehensive and durable peace in Mindanao was "getting nearer and nearer." Among the issues to be discussed was a political solution between the two parties, he said.

Malaysia has been mediating in peace talks between Manila and the 12,000-strong MILF, which has been fighting for over two decades to set up an Islamic state in predominantly Christian Mindanao.

The MILF has been demanding that it be granted rights over its "ancestral domain" or homeland which traditionally means the entire Mindanao, where they have been fighting to establish an independent Islamic state.

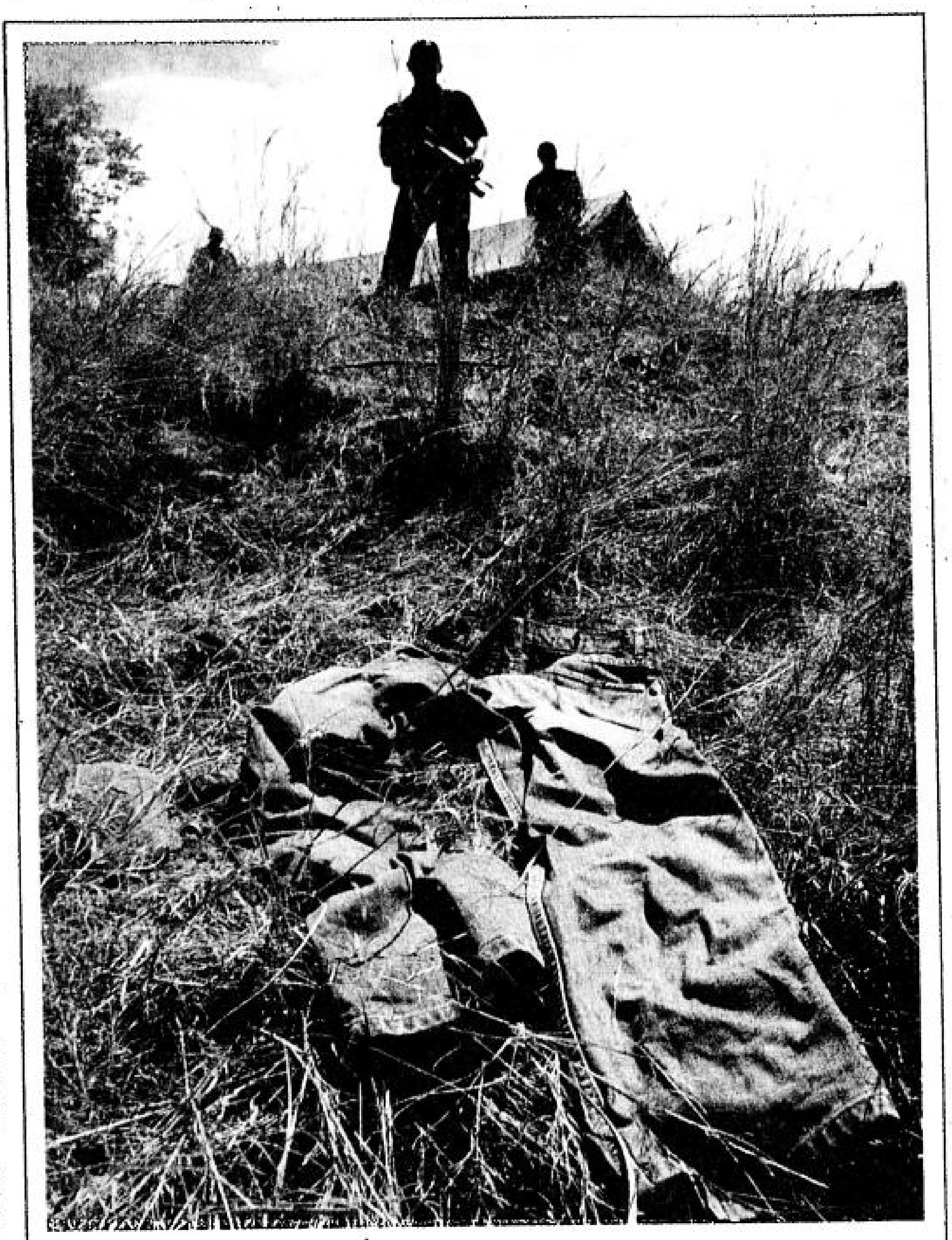
The Philippine government and the MILF signed a ceasefire in 2001 and opened peace talks, but one of the stumbling blocks was the rebels' demand for recognition of their ancestral domain.

"Surely, we are now in the final stretch of our peace talks, in our journey towards finding a comprehensive, just, and lasting solution to this problem in Mindanao," Iqbal said.

Iqbal said the government and the MILF should not fail to "seize this opportunity."

The new round of negotiations, which started on Monday, focused on the form of government under the proposed political settlement for the MILF and the future of its fighters.

But Iqbal said that despite the bright prospects, the gains of the peace process could still be spoiled by groups who want violence to reign in Mindanao. *AFP with a report from Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



COMBAT UNIFORM LYN RILLON

A police officer looks at a bloodied pair of pants left at a hillside in Sta. Ignacia, Tarlac where government soldiers clashed with communist guerrillas last week. The pants were believed to belong to a slain guerrilla.

Gambling operator surfaces, complains of rising amount of protection money

By Felipe V. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—A GAMBLING OPERATOR WENT to the police here to confess that he stopped operating an illegal numbers game because he could no longer afford paying protection money demanded by a provincial police group.

Rogelio "Nonoy" Buaron told city police officials that he stopped his illegal gambling operation on Jan. 15.

Buaron, of President Roxas town in Capiz, said he ceased his "Pick 2" and "Pick 3" gambling operations because he could no longer afford the protection money allegedly demanded by the Provincial Special Operations Group (PSOG) under Senior Insp. Erwin Margarejo.

Senior Supt. Cipriano Querol, provincial police director, dismissed Buaron's claim against his men as "purely lies."

He said Buaron stopped his operation because the provincial police, particularly the PSOG, were after him and his illegal operation.

"Pick 2" and "Pick 3" operates like the online lottery run by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), Buaron said. It also involves a bettor picking six numbers for a minimum bet of P10.

The winning numbers are based on the winning numbers of lotto. But unlike in lotto where a bettor has to get all six numbers right to win, a "Pick 2" and "Pick 3" bettor wins by getting just two or three numbers right.

Buaron said he gave P6,000 in grease money monthly to the PSOG for the protection of his illegal gambling operation.

He said other gambling operators gave as much as P30,000 monthly to the PSOG, which he said he could not afford.

Buaron said he was forced to go to the city police for help after receiving reports that the PSOG was planning to frame him on illegal drug and gun charges.

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Baguio reacts to Pasig stampede

BAGUIO CITY—MAYor Braulio Yaranon issued new rules regulating public performances, parades and street protests in the city on Sunday, a day after the stampede that killed 74 people at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City.

Administrative Order 25 requires all assemblies to obtain permits.

Yaranon cited the "stampedes caused by surging, uncontrolled, massive crowds such as those in religious rites in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, sports events in Europe and lately in Ultra in Pasig City."

He said all public activities, including parades, assemblies, performances and similar activities ... "where there is numerous gathering and convergence of crowds, spectators, participants, and the general public ... shall be issued a permit at a time."

The order states that no permit for a similar activity will be issued within 12 hours after the end of the previous activity.

This will affect the 11th staging of the Baguio flower festival, which will be mounted as two simultaneous events by two competing organizations.

The festivals have drawn about a million tourists in the last 10 years, according to the Department of Tourism.

The extensive marketing that will come to play due to the unofficial showdown is expected to draw even bigger crowds. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI N. Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Clark to pursue tax perks

CLARK Development Corp. will be relentless in pursuing a permanent solution to the issue on tax and duty free privileges here, following the Supreme Court's refusal to reverse a ruling last year that only Subic is allowed to grant tax perks to investors. With the high tribunal's decision, CDC president Antonio Ng said in a press statement that the CDC would pursue "with even greater vigor . . . the passing of two bills in Congress to ease up apprehension of investors inside the Clark Special Economic Zone." Ng said more members of the House of Representatives are supporting HB 4900 and 4901 authored by Rep. Jesli Lapus (3rd District, Tarlac) to clarify tax incentives for Clark investors.

Mayor offers reward for killers

MABALACAT, Pampanga—Mayor Marino Morales has offered P100,000 to anyone who can give information on the suspects in the murder of three men here on Feb. 3. Police said victims Jan Nikols Vitug, 20, Michael Manalo, 25, and Russel Julian, 22, were walking in Sitio Aguso in Barangay San Francisco here when four men stopped them. The suspects, who were armed with .45 cal. and 9 mm guns, ordered them to drop to the ground and then shot them. The victims' fourth companion, Marvin Canasa, 20, was hit in the shoulder and survived the attack. *Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

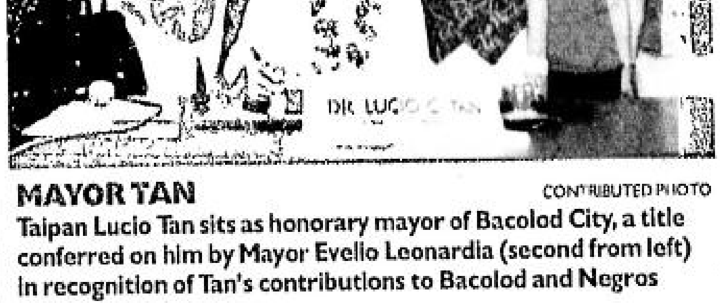
Less known boxer gets award

DUMAGUETE CITY—The provincial government will give a P50,000 cash incentive to boxer Jimrex Jaca for his victory over Mexican opponent Geronimo Hernandez in Las Vegas on Jan. 22. Jaca stopped Hernandez in the first round of their fight, which was one of the undercard bouts of the Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales rematch. Jaca, whose real name is Jimwel Divino, is a native of Barangay Boloc-boloc in Sibulan town, 6 km north of here. Sibulan also gave Jaca P10,000 in cash and a plaque of appreciation. Officials said Jaca's victory inspired many young men of the town to take interest in boxing.

Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

P98-M EU grant

CITY OF CALAPAN—Oriental Mindoro received a P98-million European Union grant, according to Provincial Health Officer Normando S. Legazpi. It will be used to improve the provincial hospital, satellite hospitals, 18 rural health units and 25 barangay health stations. It will fund the Health Investment Plan for 2006-2010 which seeks to improve health services.
Marciano T. Virola, Jr. PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



MAYOR TAN CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Taipan Lucio Tan sits as honorary mayor of Bacolod City, a title conferred on him by Mayor Evelio Leonardia (second from left) in recognition of Tan's contributions to Bacolod and Negros Occidental.

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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Tug-of-war for cash found in stampede

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TWO DAYS AGO, THE PASIG CITY RESCUE Team returned P49,000 in cash to the daughters of Aurora Soriano who was killed during the stampede at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City last Saturday.

The story would have ended there except that another family has come forward to claim the money.

Rizaldy Javierto and his three brothers appeared at the Eastern Police District office yesterday morning, claiming that the money belonged to their mother, Virginia, who died with their sister Josephine Bara during the stampede.

Javierto told the INQUIRER that his mother had withdrawn P50,000 from the Philippine Veterans Bank in Camp Aguinaldo on Friday noon. The money came from the pension fund of their late father who had served in the United States Army, he said.

From the bank, their mother, together with Bara, and her other daughter Estrellita Udarbe, decided to go to the PhilSports Arena to line up for the first anniversary celebration of the ABS-CBN noontime show Wowowee.

But Virginia and Josephine ended up dead after the stampede the following morning.

Udarbe, who was further down the line, survived. She told her brothers that their mother had P50,000 on her that day.

Shocked

"We were told the money had been recovered by rescuers. But we were shocked when our neighbors told us that the Pasig City Government had turned over P49,000 to another family," said Ramon, another son.

Rescue volunteer Candy Lacno turned over the cash to Soriano's daughters Lovinsky and Shirley on Monday afternoon inside Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio's office.

Lacno said she had recovered the money from Soriano's pocket when she frisked the body for identification cards.

The Javiertos, however, said the money could have belonged to their mother.

Bank certification

The family produced a certification from a bank which showed that Virginia had withdrawn 50 P1,000 bills.

But the money reportedly recovered from Soriano were 49 P1,000 bills, leaving policemen puzzled.

Rescue worker Rommel Antinero, who reportedly recovered the money with Lacno, told the INQUIRER they also recovered identification cards along with the P1,000 bills.

The card belonged to Soriano, Antinero said.

"The bills were folded into three piles. There were also identification cards inside her pocket, including a senior citizen's card," Antinero said in Filipino.

"We were able to track down her family because of the IDs," he added.

Authorities said they would invite both families to police headquarters for questioning to find out if one—or two women—brought big sums of money with them that fateful day, and eventually settle the issue of ownership.

How dare you scold ABS-CBN!

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

HOW DARE INTERIOR UNDERSECRETARY Marius Corpus scold the country's biggest and most powerful broadcast network, ABS-CBN!

Doesn't he know that even his Big Boss, President Macapagal-Arroyo, would not want to cross swords with the Lopezes of ABS-CBN represented by Eugenio "Gabby" Lopez III?

Corpus' statement, which got the goat of Gabby Lopez, was uncalled for and, therefore, he should be put in his place.

As head of Task Force Ultra, probing into the cause of last Saturday's deadly stampede, Corpus said the crowd outside Ultra was "exploited, manipulated and treated like a herd of animals."

Immediately after Lopez expressed outrage over Corpus's statement, Corpus had to apologize. He said his statement was his own personal opinion and didn't reflect that of Task Force Ultra.

Now, you're talking.

* * *

While ABS-CBN has the country's best talents in broadcast journalism, public service and variety shows, it has incompetent officials and staff in other departments like that of security.

Rene Luspo, the network's security chief, didn't know his job.

He coordinated with the Pasig police and the local government, all right, but he didn't follow up on his request for help.

Luspo, a virtually unknown officer when he was still with the Philippine Navy, relied on the power of ABS-CBN to do the magic.

A security officer worth his salt would have known police culture that implies, "*Ang lagay, eh, ganoon na lang ba* (The point is, is that all there is to it)?"

Had a retired policeman been chief of ABS-CBN security department, perhaps the stampede that killed 74 persons and injured many more would have been avoided.

A former cop would have followed up his request with the police for additional security through wheeling and dealing.

* * *

Several weeks after the triumphant return to Manila of boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, the issue refuses to die down.

Why did Mayor Lito Atienza have to parade the boxing sensation around his city to the detriment of the other mayors?

For the same reason that in the past, even when he came home defeated, Atienza also paraded Pacquiao around the city.

The mayor and the boxer are close friends.

Is it wrong to be proud of one's friend in his moment of triumph?

METROBRIEFS

Makati has new park

HAAY SALAMAT NAMAN

THE MAKATI City government will soon open another park in the city, right underneath the busy Makati Interchange. The city's Department of Environmental Services (DES) has nearly completed landscaping the Magallanes Park, located at the intersection of Chino Roces Avenue and the President Sergio Osmena Highway. The park is part of the city's development plan aimed at beautifying major roads, intersections and sidewalks. "Possibly by the end of the month, the park would already be opened. We have removed the jeepneys using the area as a terminal so that the space would only be for the use of commuters and pedestrians," said DES Chief Danilo Villas.

Tarra V. Quismundo

Rerouting in Mandaluyong

MOTORISTS in Mandaluyong should avoid passing through Kalentong St., Shaw Boulevard, Bonifacio, A. Luna, Aglipay, and Maysilo Circle from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. today. In observance of the city's 61st Liberation Day and 12th cityhood anniversary, a commemorative ceremony will be held on Kalentong St. this morning, followed by a military and civic parade at 3 p.m. All vehicles bound for Sta. Ana, Manila should take the alternate route of Libertad St. or Samat St. towards Barangka Drive, straight to the Makati-Mandaluyong Bridge, instead of Lambingan Bridge in Kalentong. Edsa-bound vehicles coming from Manila must take Haig St., to Gomezville, Shaw Boulevard. San Juan and Manila-bound motorists from Shaw Boulevard should turn on Torres St. then left on Guerrero St., straight to Haig St., left on Kalentong and right on Sevilla Bridge.

'Ecstasy' found in trader's bag at Naia

By Nikko Dizon

A BUSINESSWOMAN was apprehended yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) for allegedly trying to sneak into the country around 16 kilos of suspected "Ecstasy" and Bangkok pills.

Luz Anastacio, of San Pablo, Laguna, had just arrived from Bangkok, Thailand on board Thai Airways flight TG 620 at 3:20 p.m., when customs inspectors found the suspected illegal drugs hidden in different canisters in her bag.

Expensive hoard

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) at the Naia said that an "Ecstasy" tablet has a street value of P2,000, while a set of Bangkok pills that could be consumed in a month has an estimated value of P3,500.

PDEA agents said the pills found in Anastacio's possession would be subjected to laboratory tests to determine if these were indeed prohibited drugs.

Anastacio has been placed under the joint custody of the PDEA and Bureau of Customs offices at the Naia.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City, 1100 Philippines

INVITATION FOR IMMEDIATE APPLICATION AS CHIEF OF THE SEAFDEC AQUACULTURE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Agriculture wishes to announce its invitation to qualified applicants to the post of Department Chief, SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department based in Tigbauan, Iloilo.

Minimum Qualifications Standard

1. Ph.D. degree in Fisheries or equivalent related disciplines with previous experience in research, administrative and financial management;
2. At least five (5) years professional working experience in related fields and established interpersonal collaborative working relationships both with the concerned government entities and the aquaculture sector in the fisheries industry;
3. Potential leadership and governance accountability over the department including proven capacity for initiative, maturity of judgment, effective communication and diplomatic ability at the national, regional and international levels of talks and negotiation;
4. Must be willing to travel on a regional/international missions and domestic commitments.

Acceptance of Application

1. Deadline for submission of application will be until 19th February 2006 which should be received and addressed to Undersecretary Salvador S. Salacup at the Department of Agriculture, ITCAF Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
2. Submit your application together with the following documents:
   a. Curriculum Vitaé with 2x2 picture
   b. Scholastic credentials (certified true copy from original)
   c. Certificates of previous employment
   d. Knowledge and perceptions on SEAFDEC-AQD and your conceived plans and projections for the next five (5) years of administration.

Interview:

Successful applicants will be interviewed by the Screening Committee on a specified schedule which will be notified thru e-mail, fax or phone confirmations.

(Sgd.) SALVADOR S. SALACUP
OIC-Undersecretary for Fisheries,
as Chairman, Screening Committee

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LIVELIHOOD CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID

The Livelihood Corporation - KKK Processing Authority is inviting interested parties to join in the public bidding for the sale or lease of the following real estate properties:

PROPERTY/ADDRESS	AREA	DESCRIPTION	FLOOR PRICE
1. MAKATI PROPERTY 7th Flr. One Corporate Plaza, 845 Arnaiz Ave.,Makati City	987.75 sq.m.	Condominium Units (Whole 7th Floor)	39,510,000.00
2. LAGUNA PROPERTY Km. 71, Brgy. San Andres, Alaminos, Laguna	17,394 sq.m.	Industrial Land (Former Dairy Project)	7,456,000.00
3. DAVAO PROPERTY R. Castillo Street, Brgy. Agdao, Davao City	3,695 sq.m.	Light Industrial Land	5,815,000.00
4. BULACAN PROPERTY Purok 4, Brgy. Santisima Trinidad, Malolos, Bulacan	3,397 sq.m.	Residential Land	4,076,000.00
5. BOHOL PROPERTY Brgy. Dampas, Tagbilaran City, Bohol	551 sq.m.	Residential Lots (2 Adjoining Lots)	1,488,000.00
6. CABANATUAN PROPERTY Brgy. Kalikid Sur (Cabu), Cabanatuan City	1,335 sq.m.	Residential Land	401,000.00
7. BATANGAS PROPERTY Lot 7 Block 2 Cobella Homes, Danaza, Tanauan, Batangas	137 sq.m.	Residential Lot	343,000.00
8. BACOLOD PROPERTY Pag-asa Street Extension, Brgy. Tangub, Bacolod City	220 sq.m.	Residential Land	341,000.00
9. PANGASINAN PROPERTY Brgy. Buenlag, Binmaley, Pangasinan	1,506 sq.m.	Residential Land	301,000.00

Conditions:

a) Winning bidders shall assume responsibility of paying any and/or all taxes and liens relative to the sale or transfer of the properties.
b) Official Bid forms, documents, Instruction to Bidders and details can be obtained during office hours from the Estate Development and Management Division located at the above-given address after paying to the Cashier a non-refundable amount of Php 500.00 only.
c) All Bids must be submitted to the Office of the Chairman - LIVECOR Bids and Awards Committee attention to the BAC Secretariat not later than 2:00 P.M of March 06, 2006.
d) The Livelihood Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formalities therein and to accept such bid as may be deemed advantageous to the Corporation.

Schedule of Pre-Bidding Conference will be on February 16, 2006, 2:00 P.M. at the Office of the Administrator's Conference Room, LIVECOR, 7/F One Corporate Plaza, 845 A. Arnaiz Ave., Legazpi Vill., Makati City.

For further inquiries, please call Mr. Eduardo P. Sajonia - BAC Secretariat at tel. no. 817-0771/Cell no. 0921-2783769 or Ms. Gigi Buenaventura - Division Chief, Estate Development and Management at tel. no. 817-0439/ Cell 0917-5277897.

(Sgd.) E. ALEXIS G. SEVIDAL
Chairman, LIVECOR Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Feb. 8 & 9, 2006)

DAR BIARSP

INVITATION TO BID

Asian Utility Vehicle

The Belgian Integrated Agrarian Reform Programme (BIARSP) is a bilateral development programme between the Governments of the Philippines and Belgium. Its aim is to assist the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to successfully complete the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

BIARSP is currently on its third and final phase of implementation. BIARSP is regarded as an important programme for agrarian reform. It is highly regarded for its integrated approach covering not only agricultural support services but also education, public health and institutional capacity building.

To further strengthen the programme's implementation, BIARSP supports its lead partner agency, the DAR, in upgrading its transportation complement by providing Asian Utility Vehicles (AUV) for DAR Region 7 & 9 and its DAR Provincial Offices.

The BIARSP-Technical Support and Coordination Office (TSCO) therefore invites eligible companies to bid for 10 AUVs in two batches. The vehicles shall be delivered to the four (4) provinces of Region VII and the four (4) provinces of Region IX.

Interested parties are invited to visit www.biarsptsco.org (OPPORTUNITIES – Tenders) for the specifications as well as delivery destinations for the said equipment. Please submit proposed technical document with information such as company profile, BIR tax clearance and proposed budgetary requirements, through any of the following:

E-mail : tsco@biarsptsco.org
Post : BIARSP – TSCO, 2nd Floor Sol Y Mar Bldg.,
Cor. Rizal Blvd. – San Juan Street,
Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental
Fax : (035) 422-7736

For further queries, please get in touch with Mary Marlyn C. Llosa, Administrative Officer, at telephone #s: (035) 225-5929; 225-5930; 225-8681; and 422-7459.

Interested parties are advised to submit their documents not later than March 18, 2006.

(PDI–February 9 & 12, 2006)

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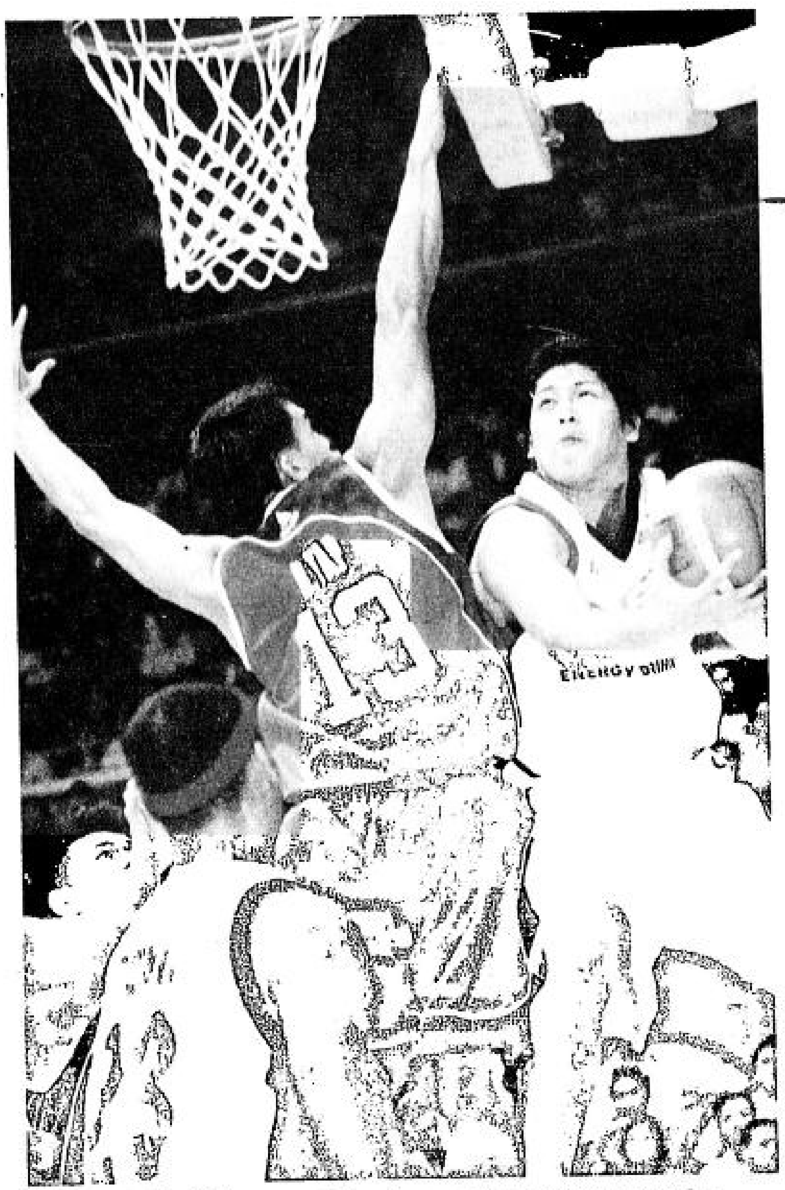


RED Bull's Rico Villanueva drives through the defense put up by Purefoods' Roger Yap in their series opener last night. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Express drub Kings in duel for 3rd place

GAME TOMORROW (Cuneta Astrodome)
6:30 p.m.—Red Bull Barako vs Purefoods

By June Navarro

A THIRD-PLACE TROPHY THAT SHINES like a championship ring.

Air21 capped a magical stint with a 108-98 victory over Barangay Ginebra in a free-wheeling battle to clinch third place in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

"It felt like we've won the championship," said Air21 coach Bo Perasol after steering the Express to their best finish in a regular conference. The Bert Lina-owned franchise's previous best was sixth in the 2002 Governors Cup.

The victory also enabled the Express to clinch their second trophy overall after finishing third in the 2003 Invitationals behind Alaska and Coca-Cola.

Shawn Daniels had a superb farewell performance with 25 points on top of 13 rebounds, seven assists, four steals and three blocks.

Daniels is in a close fight with Marquin Chandler of Purefoods for the Best Import of the Conference award.

"I have to honor my local players but without Shawn, we wouldn't be here," said Perasol, whose Express missed what could have been a historic feat of being in the PBA Finals for the first time after yielding to the Chunkee Giants in six games of their best-of-seven semifinal series.

Four other Express players wound up in double figures with Ranidel De Ocampo adding 17, Nino Cañaleta scattering 15 and Renren Ritualo and Yancy De Ocampo chipping in 14 and 10 points, respectively.

"We're unfamiliar with this situation so there's no reason for us not to play hard even though it was just a battle for third," said Perasol.

From a 29-26 edge, the Express leaned on the seldom-used Bruce Dacia and Ronald Tubid to set the tone for an early rout. Daniels and Cañaleta then fueled a third-quarter assault that put the Express out front, 86-65.

"In fairness to Ginebra, they didn't go for it," said Perasol.

"They were so down after that Game 7 loss. They have yet to recover mentally and emotionally."

Backed by a crowd of about 16,000, the Kings failed to exploit their advantage and bowed to Red Bull Barako in the other best-of-seven semifinal series.

Chris Porter led the Kings with 28 points and 17 rebounds while Eric Menk and Sunday Salvacion added 17 and 13 points each.

The scores:

AIR21 108—Daniels 25, De Ocampo 17, Canaleta 15, Ritualo 14, De Ocampo 10, Tubid 8, Dacia 7, Fran 6, Ferriols 4, Se 2.

GINEBRA 98—Porter 28, Menk 17, Salvacion 13, Helterbrand 11, Adducul 8, Macapagal 7, Holper 4, Ferreria 3, Dimaunahan 3, Sotto 2, Santos 2, Caguioa 0.

Quarters: 29-26, 58-48, 86-65, 108-98

UAAP nixes DLSU cage leave plan

By Jasmine W. Payo

WHILE A MEMBER CAN TAKE A LEAVE OF absence, it should not be from one event alone but from all sports.

This rule was cited by the UAAP board yesterday when it turned down De La Salle University's proposal to skip one basketball season in the wake of the eligibility scandal that rocked the multititled Green Archers last year.

"While recognizing the right of every member university to take a leave of absence, the board likewise took cognizance of the fact that basketball is a compulsory sport, which every member university must participate in," the board said in a statement after an emergency meeting at Casa Espanol.

The board stressed that La Salle may still take a break from the league next season, but the university must file a leave of absence from all 14 sports covering the men, women and juniors divisions.

"Any member school has the right to take a leave of absence from the league," said Dr. Ricardo Matibag, league secretary treasurer. "But if one member has to take a leave of absence, it has to be in the entirety of the league."

Last Jan. 23, La Salle filed a one year leave of absence from the men's basketball tournament only.

La Salle officials said the move was part of the school's attempt to rebuild its cage program rocked by the eligibility scandal involving Archers Mark Benitez and Tim Gatchalian.

However, a UAAP rule states that a member school cannot pull out of one of two compulsory sports—basketball and volleyball.

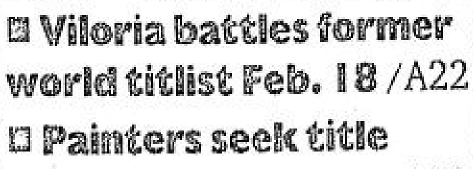
"We are now leaving it to the hands of De La Salle to decide if it would continue with its leave [which should be sweeping]," added Matibag.

The same statement also hinted that the eligibility case hounding La Salle would see no closure any time soon, noting that the UAAP board "would be acting on the report of the fact-finding committee in its next regular meeting late next month."

The league vowed earlier that the investigating committee would submit its decision and recommendations by the end of February.

Suspension is among the possible sanctions the league could impose on La Salle due to the eligibility controversy. Twelve years ago, the UAAP also slapped a one-year suspension on Adamson for fielding cager Marlou Aquino in the men's basketball tournament despite academic deficiencies.

WHAT'S INSIDE



☐ Viloria battles former world titlist Feb. 18 /A22
☐ Painters seek title sweep vs Wizards /A20

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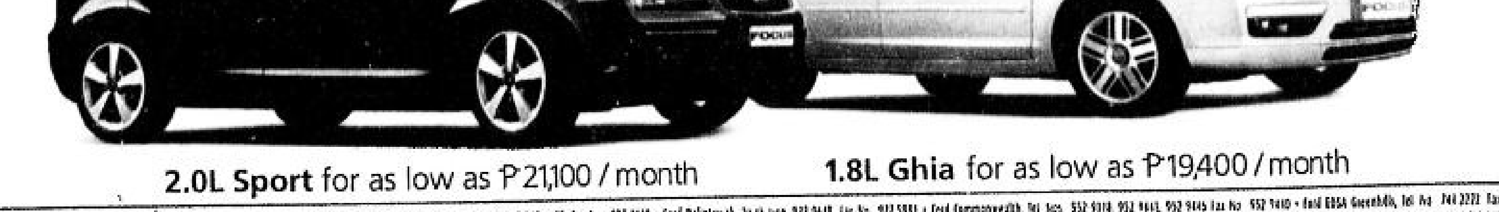

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West Visayans forge ahead

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—A FOUR-WAY fight for overall honors shaped up as Western Visayas forged ahead by only two gold medals over Central Visayas on the second day of the Private Schools Athletic Association (Prisaa) National Games yesterday at the Narciso Ramos Sports and Civic Center here.

The WV delegation amassed 23 golds on top of 38 silvers and 23 bronzes while the CV squad had a gold-silver-bronze harvest of 21-11-25 as of 4:30 p.m.

Southern Mindanao and Southern Tagalog shared third with 19 golds and host Ilocos was the only other region with double-digit number of golds with 15.

Central Luzon and Western Mindanao had a gold each while NCR-North, Central Mindanao, Cagayan Valley, Caraga and Bicol have none.

Meanwhile, Rochelle Corpuz and Russel Camero starred for the Ilocanos' strong 15-gold showing for the day. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon bureau*

NATIONAL Capital Region cagebelles battle the Western Visayans in the Prisaa games yesterday.

RAY B. ZAMBRANO

Painters seek title sweep vs Wizards

GAME TODAY *(San Andres Gym)*
3:30 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Magnolia (Game 3 Finals)

IT TOOK SOME TIME FOR JUNJUN CABATU to adjust to his new team but when he did, he played hero twice over for Rain or Shine in the ongoing PBL Heroes Cup title series.

With the Elasto Painters enjoying a 2-0 lead, the young forward is expected to play a key role again when Rain or Shine shoots for a three-game championship sweep of the Magnolia Wizards today at the San Andres Gym.

"His hard work is now paying off," said Painters coach Caloy Garcia of the La Salle standout and son of former pro Sonny Cabatu.

The Painters, whose franchise owns the most number of titles in the league, and the Wizards collide in Game 3 of the best-of-five series at 3:30 p.m.

"I told them not to relax until we have the trophy in our hands," said Garcia. "I already told the boys to give their best effort to finish the series."

"Of course it's a different feeling if you sweep a title series, that's why we will work hard and play passionately to win the series," Garcia added.

After Most Valuable Player Jojo Tangkay and veterans Eugene Tan and Marvin Ortiguerra powered the Painters to the finals, it was Cabatu's turn to deliver sensational performances by averaging 20.5 points on a 60 percent field goal shooting in the playoffs.

The Wizards know that momentum isn't on their side, but remain optimistic that they can extend the series.

"There's still hope," said Wizards coach Koy Banal. "I trust my players."

The Wizards aren't shooting for an impossible task. In 1998, Dr. J Rubbing Alcohol rose from a 0-2 deficit versus Tanduay to bag the championship. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Surprising Ubasa & ecstatic Nelson

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

SILANG, CAVITE—THE NUANCES OF TEAMwork in golf are usually beyond defining. Almost by tradition, the best teams on paper in a Pro-Am tournament do not win.

The Konica Minolta National Pro-Am that holds its second day today at Riviera's Langer here is no exception.

Take yesterday's case. The leaders, Erwin Arcillas and Bong Ubasa, were practically unknowns until yesterday.

It's only the first day and, concededly, there is a golf eternity left as we still have three more rounds to play for the P1.7 million pot staked mainly by Bert Bravo of U-Bix Corporation.

But if only for their feat that was considered exceptional by the yardstick of excellence, the leaders bear watching.

For one, Arcillas, 29, just turned pro two years ago. There was nothing spectacular about him before he turned pro; he remains unspectacular 24 months after he turned pro.

For another, Ubasa, 33, left the country for England when he was 7 years old. He picked up golf only seven years ago.

Add yet this startling fact: It was their first team-up in the fabled event that requires a duo to hit one ball alternately.

And take this: Ubasa set foot at Riviera's Langer only yesterday and, moments later, proceeded to play his first round at the course generally conceded as one of the country's toughest layouts.

Now they are leading the nation's oldest professional golf tournament born in 1958—second only in age to the Philippine Open that began in 1913.

Although it's still too early to say whether they will win on Saturday, I raise a glass already to Arcillas and Ubasa. What they've done yesterday is another good copy, a topic of clubhouse talk, in a sport that is traditionally littered with improbabilities.

***

While at it, was I glad I played host yesterday to Nelson and Vielma Almonguerra of Roxas City, Tito and Baby Laurel of New York City, Dante and Ching Fernandez of Phoenix, Arizona, and Sol Juvida of Calauag, Quezon, as they paid the Konica Minolta event a surprise visit on their way to Manila from an overnight stay at Taal Vista Hotel in nearby Tagaytay City.

My dear buddy, Nelson, a retired schoolteacher like Vielma, was overly ecstatic as it was his first time to set foot on a golf course.

"I'll have plenty of stories to tell my friends back in Roxas City when I go home," said Nelson, who taught for 38 years like Vielma. "This is really an experience for me, seeing the Riviera golf course that is so beautiful really. Ah, the vast open space all around us, the air so fresh to breath, the lush greenery all over. Unforgettable indeed!"

Tito Laurel said he had really wanted to become a golfer "since I first arrived in America, in Chicago actually, but I discovered my skin was allergic to the sun."

Still, he frequented golf clubs, "but only to drink beer with my buddies at the clubhouse after they've completed their rounds."

I offered Tito and my friends beer at the handsome Riviera clubhouse, but they preferred fresh juice sipped direct from the coconut husk.

"I hope they enjoyed every drop of it as they've been harvested just today," said Joe Dagdagan, the amiable Riviera golf course superintendent.

Sure they did, Joe. Thanks.

***

FASTBREAK. Tickets to The Zombies concert, particularly that one at Araneta on Feb. 13, are selling like hotcakes. "But everything's under control," said Luke Pasiliao of the organizing Solar Entertainment in cooperation with Steve O'Neal. Thank God. My colleague Quinito Henson of The Star has written last week a beautiful piece about the return of The Zombies in Manila after their first visit here nearly 39 years ago. "Should I try to hide…" Wow! That opening line of The Zombies' hit "The Way I Feel Inside" really knocked me out the first time I heard it in the Sixties!... I welcome to the world Luke Gregory Magturo, who was born yesterday to proud parents Luth and Lorie. Cheers!

Tagaytay dribblers get baptism of fire in NBC

EXPANSION TEAM BATANG TAGaytay WILL get its baptism of fire when it competes in the fourth leg of the Nature's Spring-National Basketball Conference pre-season series on Feb. 14-18 at the Tagaytay Convention Center.

Joining Mayor Bambol Tolentino's cagers in the tournament are the Pagadian Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co, Bacchus-Harbour Cntre and NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla's Spring Cooking Oil Masters.

"This tourney serves as part of our preparation for our initial participation in the NBC which opens on March 10 here in our city," said Tolentino, who is also known for his patronage of chess and cycling.

Batang Tagaytay's team will be launched Feb. 14 before the start of the pre-season series supported by Sulpicio Lines, Molten, Panasonic, Spring Cooking Oil and Prime Channel.

Batang Tagaytay will be handled by former Micaa and PBA player Ramir Bayot with Ramil Ferma as his assistant. Team manager is Councilor Patricio Pello.

The players include Chris Corbin, Joel Finuliar, McDonald Santos, Rey Ober, Tito Reyes, Ian Pellejera, Gian Carlo Yabut, Eric Larica, Ian Bayot, Don Mordeno, Nelson Genido and Maurice Lascana.

TENNIS STAR: Maria Sharapova finds the Prince O3 White vital in her campaign.

JVC expands jr badminton program

JVC, RESPONDING TO THE GROWing clamor to expand the base of its junior badminton program, will now include a 12-under category when it stages the nationwide JVC Open Juniors Championships beginning next month in various SM malls.

Players who used to play in the 10-and-under category the past two years will now have a separate tournament of their own as the sponsoring JVC has decided to put up the new category while retaining the 10-under class and the 14-under division.

"JVC recognizes the need to provide our junior players a separate tournament and give them the exposure they deserve," said JVC (Phils.) Inc. president and CEO Hideyuki Takato.

The organizing IMG said the tournament will start March 25-26 at SM Megamall.

Entry forms can be downloaded from the event's website and can be sent through fax at 894-2995 and 892-9866. For details, contact 894-2995, 8929866 and 725-2568.

onal Golf Tournament
Febru 3, 2006

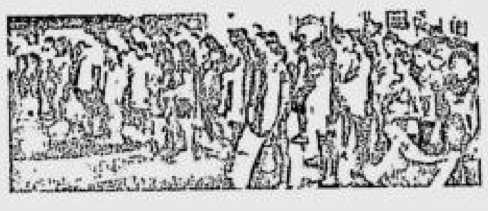
MANGO TEE CHAMPS: Rolando Carlos (center) and Simon Sawit (second from left) emerged overall champions of the 22nd Mango Tee Invitational member-guest tournament of the Alabang Country Club Inc. From left, ACCI chair Johnny Castillo, Julie Carceller of Smart Communications, Ed Chua of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum, ACCI president Paul Cortez and Rolly Camu of the organizing committee.

TOBY'S
JUNIORS
VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

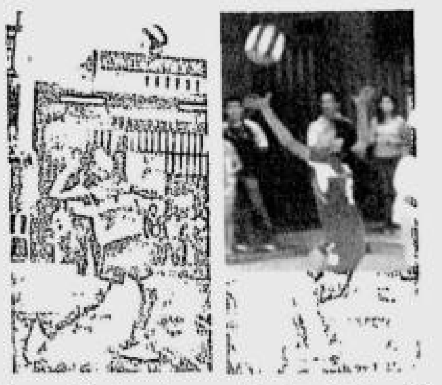
BALARA ELEMENTARY, DE LA SALLE-LIPA, CHRISTIAN VALUES SCHOOL SCORE IN STRAIGHT SETS

Mr. Toby Claudio, Operations Manager of Toby's Sports, together with Organizer Freddie Infante and Host School Principal, Ms. Helen Villanueva welcome and address the participants, sponsors and guests during the opening of the 1st Toby's Sports Junior Volleyball League.

The Junior girls' teams showed their skills as they debuted in the initial games of the Toby's Sports Junior Volleyball League at the MGC New Life Christian Academy Gym last Sunday, February 5th.



Balara Elementary beat St. Francis of Assisi 25-8, 25-6 while De La Salle-Lipa likewise stunned St. Jude Catholic School 25-7, 25-11. In a closely contested match, Christian Values School defeated host MGC New Life Christian Academy 25-20, 25-22.



On Saturday, February 11, matches will be held at the Talayan Village Gym beginning 10:00am as follows:

10:00am - DLS vs. UPHM (B)
11:00am - DLS vs UPHM (G)
1:00pm - SJCS vs CSA (G)
2:00pm - SJCS vs CVS (B)
3:00pm - BES vs CVS (G)

The league returns to the MGC New Life Christian Academy Gym on Sunday, February 12 and will start at 12:00nn with five games as follows:

12:00nn - SFAC vs. DLS (B)
1:00pm - SFAC vs. UPHM (G)
2:00pm - DLS vs. BES (G)
3:00pm - SJCS vs. MGC (G)
4:00pm - SJCS vs. UPHM (B)

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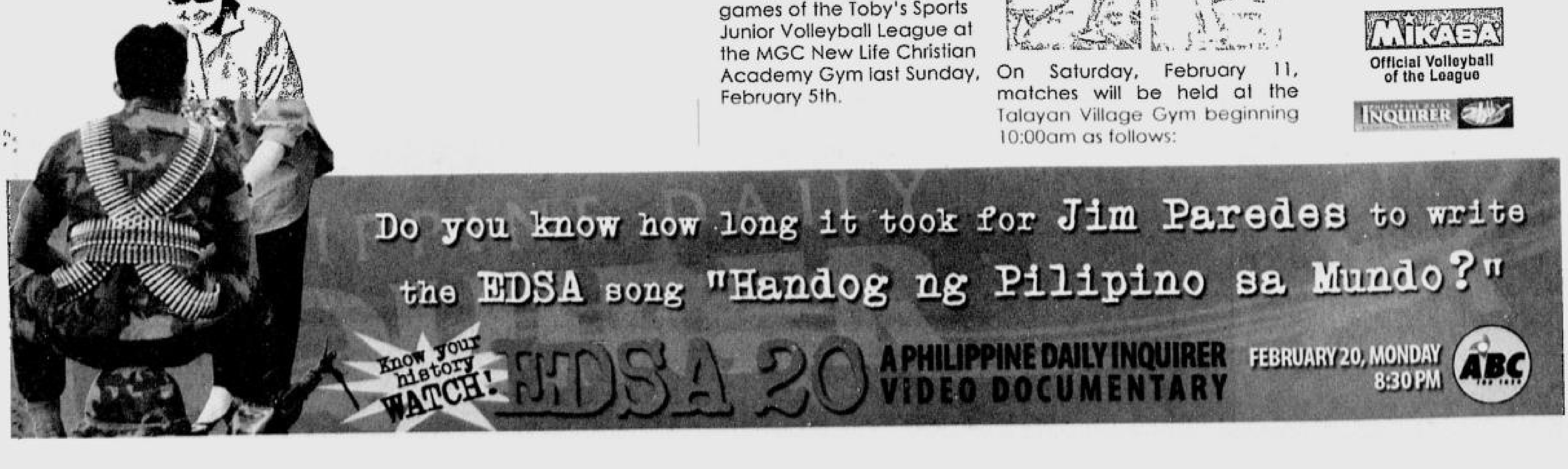

Do you know how long it took for Jim Paredes to write the EDSA song "Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo?"

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FEBRUARY 20, MONDAY 8:30PM

ABC

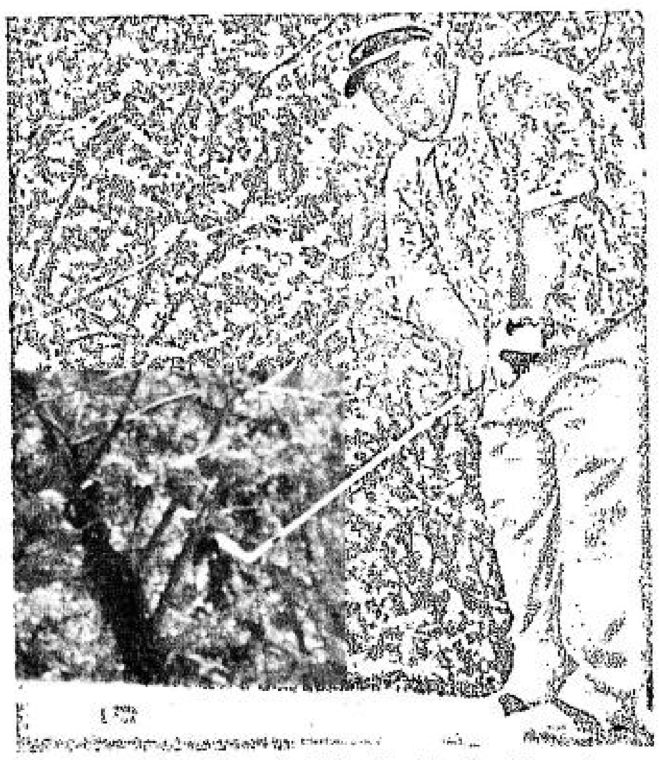
BRC hosting drag racing

IT WILL BE A WILD CHASE FOR THE COVETED Drag Race Driver of the Year award as Bobby Cunanan and Leo Joel Cordero join the contenders for the plum in the championship round of the 2005 Red Horse-PCSO National Drag Racing Championship Series on Saturday at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas.

Cunanan and Cordero tote similar 30 points after ruling their respective divisions in two of the past three legs of the event held in cooperation with the Automobile Association of the Philippines.

Another win would give Quick 8 top guns Sonny de Torres of Group N—Jack Daniels-Matonetics Racing and Walter Pazon of Blanche Racing—a tough fight in the event sponsored by Red Horse, PCSO, Petron and Sparco.

Cunanan leads the title race in the Sportsman class while Cordero ruled the second and third legs to snatch the solo top spot in the Pro class.



GERARD Cantada on track of defending his title with amateur partner JR Tanpinco.

ERIK ARAZAS

Arcillas-Ubasa paces Konica pro-am golf

By Jong Arcano

SILANG, CAVITE—THE UNHERALDED pair of Edwin Arcillas and *balikbayan* Bong Ubasa came closest to par with a 2-over 73 yesterday that was good for a one-stroke lead over two-time defending champion Gerard Cantada and JR Tanpinco and two other tandems after the opening round of the Konica-Minolta National Pro-Am here.

The 29-year-old Arcillas and Ubasa, a personnel assistant at Intercon Hotel in London who is vacationing here with his family, made a birdie on the 13th hole against three bogeys in their nines of 37-36 at the treacherous Langer course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club as they grabbed the spotlight from the more prominent names in this P1.7 million tourney.

Cantada and his buddy Tanpinco put in motion their bid for a third consecutive crown by turning in one of the three 74s. They were joined by the Rolland Fernando-Anthony Fernando and Richard Abaring-Marvin Dumanan combinations.

Juvic Pagunsan and Dennis Canoy shared 16th place with four others while former winners Raul and Paul Miñoza were in a seven-team logjam at 21st that also included Rey Pagunsan and Riviera club champion Bobby Celestino.

The event is backed by Grappa's Ristorante, Pivo Praha and S-Yard in cooperation with Japan's Konica Minolta, the world's leader in digital imaging. It is supported by Epson, Rowell, PCI Bank, Land Bank, PSC, Riso, Brother, WWW Express, Equitable Bank, BMG Solar, Casio, Okamura, BPI, Union Bank, Airlift Asia, Inc., Pacsports, Metrobank, UCPB, Industrial Waste Systems Inc. and ServiceMaster.

Bacolod, Iloilo hosting Camel Supercross 2006

FOLLOWING LAST YEAR'S HIGHLY successful season which drew record crowds, the Camel Supercross will hold two more competitions in Bacolod City and Iloilo City on Feb. 19 and March 5.

Dubbed "Camel Supercross International Championship Series 2006," the two-part competition sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa) will again feature the best riders in the region.

Heading the riders vying for honors this year are internationalists Glenn Aguilar of the Philippines and James Robinson of New Zealand.

Also entered are multi-titled Jovie Saulog, Kenneth San Andres, Bebet de la Cruz, Pepo Rubi and other talented riders from Western Visayas and key cities and provinces in the country.

"As in the previous years, we are very happy to hold another edition of the Camel Supercross in Bacolod and Iloilo," said Camel brand marketing manager Edward Cruz.

Namssa president Ken Falco expressed his gratitude to Camel for hosting two more supercross races this year. Call 0917-8992363.

SPORTSWATCH

RP badminton bets to show best

THE LOCAL contingent goes up against some of the world's best players in the first Philippine Open Badminton Championships slated March 1-5 at the Philsports Arena. "Our chances would be hard to say, but our preparedness and the luck of the draw will surely count a lot," said Kennie Asuncion, spearhead of the local bid in the $120,000 event expected to lure close to 200 players from 25 countries. Asuncion will compete in the ladies doubles with Paola Obanana and in the mixed doubles with brother Kennevic. Denmark, Germany and England will lead the elite cast.

SBC-Alabang, Ateneo prevail

SAN BEDA College-Alabang, Ateneo de Manila, and St. Scholastica's College emerged champions in the Primovit-Futures Basketball League (FBL) last Sunday at the Meralco gym in Pasig. In the midgets division, SBC-Alabang beat Ateneo, 64-48. Ateneo ruled the mini division at the expense of Marist, 68-52, while St. Scholastica's College beat Assumption College, 52-42, for the women's title. Present at the awarding ceremonies were Paul Wee and Dondell Pasion of Britton Distribution; Ricky Isla of Smart, Jay Salvador of Hoop Events and FBL commissioner Ramil Cruz.

2nd Caddies' Open tourney this month

CALATAGAN, BATANGAS—The second staging of the National Caddies' Open could end up as a fight for regional supremacy with bets from the Visayas and Luzon out to dislodge their Mindanao counterparts. "This could provide an interesting sidelight to the tournament," said tournament co-chair Hermie Esguerra. Davao's Jonel Ababa and brothers Mario and Joseph Labajo topped last year's initial staging. Nomination forms can be faxed to the secretariat in Calatagan (fax 0919-5470619) or Wack Wack 02-7238556 on or before Feb. 10. Call 0917-8425275 or 0917-8425257.

NCR non-master championship

THE NATIONAL Capital Region (NCR) non-master chess championship starts tomorrow at the 5th floor of Marketplace Shopping Mall in Gen. Kalentong St., Mandaluyong City. The three-day event, sponsored by Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino of Tagaytay City is open to all untitled chess players and will serve as the first of several regional qualification tournaments to select the members of the Philippine men's chess team to the 2006 World Chess Olympiad to be held in Turin, Italy, on May 19 to June 5. Contact tournament director Willie Abalos at 0921-6219898 or IA Gene Poliarco (0915-3163810) for details.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Ort/Tri)—Mini Skirt (3), Kitana (8), Chances Are (7), Good Day (6)
Race 2—(Penta/Tri)—Moab (6), Last Snip (3), La Tienne (10), Golden Pharoah (11), Zubaida (8)
Race 3—(Ort/Tri)—En Carta (9), Desert Breeze (6), Angel Eyes (2), Bold Lucky (4)
Race 4—(Ort/Tri)—Hoy Sobra Na (11), Dancing Queen (14), Tennessee (13), Black Emperor (1)
Race 5—(Penta/Tri)—Uncle (3), Powerhouse/Tell Henry (5), Ocen Cookie (2), La Signorina (8), Mercurian (6)
Race 6—(Ort/Tri)—La Tondena (3), Red Hoot Martini (2), Bull Rider (8), Aryaam (4)
Race 7—(Penta/Tri)—Playing Cool (9), Ole! Ole! Ole! (5), Cool Turner (8), Nusic Quest (1), Princess Gillian (10)
Race 8—(Super6/Ort/Tri)—Tini Bambini (2), En Gedi/Uncle Buck (8), Silent Operator (6), Shure Bull (10), Sweat Peanut (9), Diabolo Don (3).

Record 267 fights for derby

A RECORD 267 FIGHTS WILL BE held at the 15,000-seat Roligon Mega Cockpit in connection with the 16th Anniversary 6-cock derby today.

The first fight is set at 10 a.m. "These are not just ordinary matches," said host Rolly Ligon.

"With P4 million and brand new Toyota Innova at stake, it will be a battle of champion versus champion." The Toyota Innova will be given to the fastest winning time.

A record 429 entries were registered in this event, which draw the top guns like Dicky Lim, Pol Estrellado, Rey Briones, Raymond Velayo, Mauro Prieto, Tos Reyes, Dong Lacson, Romero Yu, William Go, Allan Siaco and Boy de Roca. For details, contact 851-2275 and 833-1638.

NEW SPEEDWAY: Kilton Motor president Johnny Tan (front left) and Clark Development Corp. president and CEO Antonio Ng shake hands after signing the contract for the construction of the Clark International Speedway in Mabalacat, Pampanga. Witnesses are Batangas Racing Circuit and Carmona Circuit Phils. manager Lot M. Tan and (standing from left) Clark Development Corp. marketing manager Rafael A.S. Galvez, Senior Investment Promotions officer Andre Benedict T. Rivera, OIC for Legal Services Division lawyer Joanne D. Vitug-Evangelista and asst. manager for Investment Promotions Division Rommel C. Narciso.

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Hawks shut down Pistons

NEW YORK—JOE JOHNSON scored the game-winning lay-up with 7.5 seconds remaining to give the Atlanta Hawks a stunning 99-98 victory over the Detroit Pistons at the Philips Arena on Tuesday.

Johnson's lay-up was part of a team-high 29 point effort, while Zaza Pachulia added 16 points and Al Harrington chipped in 14 for the surging Hawks, who have won four of their past five games.

With the defeat, Atlanta (15-32) handed the Pistons their second straight loss for the first time this season.

Detroit (39-8) had two late chances to win but Richard Hamilton missed a jumper in the dying seconds and the Pistons failed to get a shot off on their final possession in the last second.

Tayshaun Prince had 29 points to lead the Pistons, who led 60-57 after the first half and shot 63.2 percent from the field.

But the Hawks stayed close to the Pistons all night and trailed by 81-77 after three quarters before finally taking the lead with 5:55 to go on a basket by Johnson.

Chauncey Billups added 20 points and seven assists for the Pistons, while Richard Hamilton scored 16.

In New York, Elton Brand scored 25 points and had 12 rebounds as the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Knicks, 85-82.

Chris Kaman added 22 points and 11 rebounds for the Clippers.

Jalen Rose, recently acquired from the Toronto Raptors for Antonio Davis, scored 23 points and Eddy Curry added 14 points for the Knicks.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 26 points and had 12 rebounds as the Mavericks beat the Los Angeles Lakers, 102-87.

Josh Howard added 22 points and had 10 rebounds for the Mavericks.

Brian Cook scored 28 points and Kobe Bryant added 24 points for the Lakers. *Reuters*

SOLAR Sports will air the Chicago-Denver tussle at 10:30 a.m. today with a replay at 8 p.m.

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	60mg Tab	13.15	64%
METOPROLOL*	50mg Tab	3.15	16%
	100mg Tab	5.40	14%
PROPRANOLOL*	10mg Tab	2.50	73%
ATENOLOL*	50mg Tab	6.85	76%
	100mg Tab	13.50	72%
ANTI-CHOLESTEROL			
SIMVASTATIN*	20mg Tab	20.70	50%
	40mg Tab	28.00	32%
ANTI-DIABETES			
GLICLAZIDE*	80mg Tab	5.75	55%
METFORMIN*	500mg Tab	4.50	54%
	850mg Tab	7.00	55%
ANTI-ASTHMA			
SALBUTAMOL*	2mg Syr x 60mL	46.80	57%
	2mg Tab	2.05	61%
ANTI-TUBERCULOSIS			
RIFAMPICIN	300mg Tab	14.00	39%
	450mg Tab	20.00	49%
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ASCORBIC ACID	500mg Tab	1.40	72%
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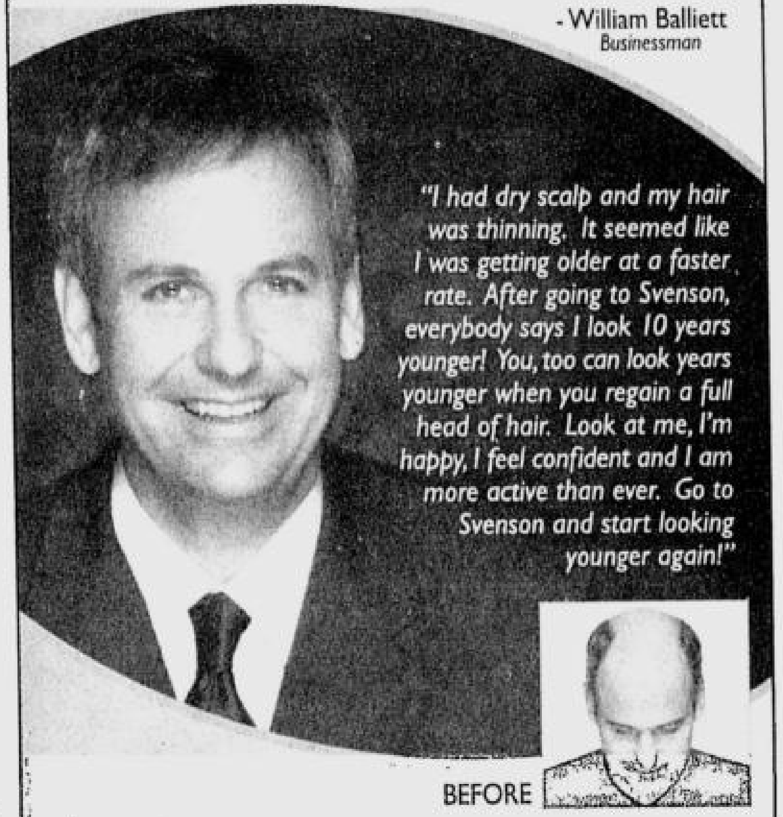
Businessman



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BRIAN Viloria (left) faces a tough foe in Jose Antonio Aguirre.

Viloria battles former world titlist Feb. 18

HE WAS SENSATIONAL IN WINNING the title. Can Filipino-American Brian Viloria duplicate that performance in his first title defense?

The answer will be known when Viloria, dubbed the "Hawaiian Punch," stakes his World Boxing Council (WBC) light flyweight crown against Jose Antonio Aguirre of Mexico on Feb. 18 (Feb. 19 in Manila) at the Aladdin Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Viloria's first title defense will serve as an appetizer to the World Boxing Organization (WBO) welterweight title clash between reigning champ Antonio Margarito and Manuel Gomez.

The fight will be aired by Solar Sports starting at 10 a.m.

Viloria, 25, captured the title with a sensational first round knockout win over another defending champion Eric Ortiz, who is another Mexican, last Sept. 10 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California.

The fighter from Waipahu, Hawaii is undefeated in 18 fights, 12 coming inside the distance.

Aguirre is by no means a patsy.

He knows what it takes to win a title being a former WBC minimumweight champion himself.

The 30-year-old Aguirre has a professional record of 33-4-1 with 20 KOs. One of his victims during his reign in the minimumweight was Filipino Manny Melchor.

Aguirre is managed by Eric Morales, who was stopped in the 10th round by Manny Pacquiao in their celebrated rematch last month also in Las Vegas.

Viloria is trained by Pacquiao's American mentor Freddie Roach.

Larios leads race for Pacman's foe

FORMER WORLD BOXING Council super bantamweight champion Oscar "Chololo" Larios of Mexico appears to be the top choice among possible Manny Pacquiao foes in a non-title appearance before his countrymen in May.

Pacquiao, according to sources, is willing and ready to co-promote with leading American network HBO the event, which will serve as his warm-up for a third encounter with Erik Morales of Mexico on Sept. 16.

Rafael Mendoza, who acts as Larios' international agent, declared in an interview with the Mexican press that his ward is ready to face Pacman in May.

Larios won the WBC super bantam title in 2002 at the expense of Israel Vazquez and held it for three years. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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TV GUIDE
Thursday, February 9, 2006

Find out who will be the next...
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ABC
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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)		Barclay's EPL		Goals		Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	SOS		Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko		Big News	American Idol 5		Dokyu	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Gulong Ng Palad	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Only You	Vietnam Rose	Forbidden Love	Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider
AXN		CSI: Miami (Season II)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	Lost		24		Fear Factor		Fear Factor		Train Wrecks		The Contender	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Tom & Jerry Show		Baby Looney Tunes	Codename Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Pido Dida				All My Life				Pangako Ikaw Lang				Kung Ikaw Ay Isang Panaginip				Bakit Papa?	
Cinemax	Greedy			Winning (4:15 PM)					A Case For Murder			The Ticket			The Prosecutors			Stop Or My Mom Will Shoot	
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Discovery Channel		Secrets To Survival		The Greatest Ever		Building The Ultimate		The Future Is Wild		Extreme Engineering		The Ultimate Ultimates		Mythbusters Breaking Glass		The Greatest Ever		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Lizzie Mcguire		Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		2004 BCA OPen 9-Ball C'ships Sfinals		Pro Billiards Sudden Death 7-ball Billiards		Winter X Games Classic		In The Driver's Seat	Pool/ Snooker Mosconi Cup 2005		Sportscenter Asia	Pool/ Snooker Mosconi Cup 2005		Winter X Games Classic	Pool/ Snooker Premier Snooker League '05				Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Who Wants To Marry My Dad 2		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Virtue Storybook	Image Of God	Your Vocation: God's Call In Your Life	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Good Or Evil- Who Decides?	EWTN Gallery	Where God Weeps	EWTN Live (Encore) With Fr Mitch Pacwa		Catechisms And Controversies	The Word Was Made Flesh	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royale Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	Le Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II		Love's Enduring Promise			Who's The Boss? II	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		McBride: Murder Past Midnight			Judging Amy (10:35PM)		Strong Medicine
HBO			Mask				Private Benjamin				New York Minute			The Glimmer Man			Breakin' All The Rules		
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		TBA						Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Smackdown				JLU	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fixi	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Tyler's Ultimate	E! News Weekend		Life Is Great With Brooke Burke	Life & Style		E! True Hollywood Story		Road & Track	Back To Basics
MTV Philippines	MTV Hits	MTV Cribs	MTV Hits		Pimp My Ride	Pop Inc.		VH1 Driven		MTV Hits		MTV Hits	Get Spotted	TRL		Punk'D	Brand New	Sessions: Kapatid	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Fresh	Star MYX	MYXILOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	Megastructures		Strange Days On Planet Earth		Edge Of Universe		Top 5 - Mysterious Universe		Wow!		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Megastructures 3: Dubai's Palm Island		Strange Days On Planet Earth	
NBN		Value Vision		Value Vision		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Network Forum		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Bakit Bughaw Ang Langit				Maging Akin Ka Lamang				Pasan Ko Ang Daigdig				Abracadabra				Jaya The Other Woman
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Striker Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	O, Mare Ko		News On Q	Women's Desk		MINT (Music Interactive)	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberrys	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	WWE Smackdown		The Ultimate Fighter		Revelations		Newswatch Now	Video Hit Parade	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports		WTA 2005 Tour Champs By LA Round Robin					NBA Game Pistons @ Hawks					NBA Game Bulls @ Nuggets					Sportsdesk	Denmark Open Men's Singles Finals	
Sports Plus	NBA Game Clippers @ New York					Party Poker.com World Open 2005				SMB Poker Bar Tour 4	Slipstream	World's Greatest Auto Shows		World Game		Ray Ban Celebrity Poker Challenge			
Star Movies			The Next Karate Kid (3:25 PM)			U-Turn (5:15 PM)				Home Alone 3 (7:15 PM)				True Lies					Vertical Limit (11:20PM)
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		American Idol 2006		Star News Asia	Friends (Series 10)	American Idol 2006		2006 48th Annual Grammy Awards Live!				Friends (Series 10)	American Idol 2006
Studio 23		Yugioh Duel Monster		UAAP				Batman Beyond	Spirits	Wazzup Wazzup	The Contender		Alias (8:20 PM)	Desperate Housewives (9:10PM)		News Central	Oprah		Salt

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ENTERTAINM

: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

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Oscars season in New York

By Alexis L. Loinaz
Contributor

NEW YORK—IT'S FASCINATING to be living in New York City when Oscars season rolls around. Suddenly the loud, self-congratulatory awards show—which happens as far away from Gotham as possible, in LA—takes on a whole new dimension.

On Jan. 31, nominations for the 78th Academy Awards were announced. Of the major nominees, 10 are from New York. And although New Yorkers love to poke fun at the whole gown-and-bling-bling parade—"so tacky," "so flashy," "so LA"—deep down inside Manhattanites are rooting for the hometown's bets.

I've lived in New York for about five years now, and every year it's the same: Local media single out Oscar nominees who either live in, were once from, or have ties to, this city. This year is no exception.

Best Actor nominee Heath Ledger and his fiance, Best Supporting Actress hopeful Michelle Williams, live in Brooklyn. Their nominated "Brokeback Mountain" director, Ang Lee, lives in

TITLE/ A2-2

> We love to poke fun at the Academy Awards—so flashy, so LA—but deep down inside, we are rooting for the hometown bets

ANG LEE lives in Manhattan

HEATH Ledger and Michelle Williams live in Brooklyn.

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12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

② FIREWALL
MTRCB PG-13
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

③ MUNICH
MTRCB : R-13
11:15, 2:20, 5:25, 9:00

④ DERAILED
MTRCB. R-13
12:10, 2:30, 9:30

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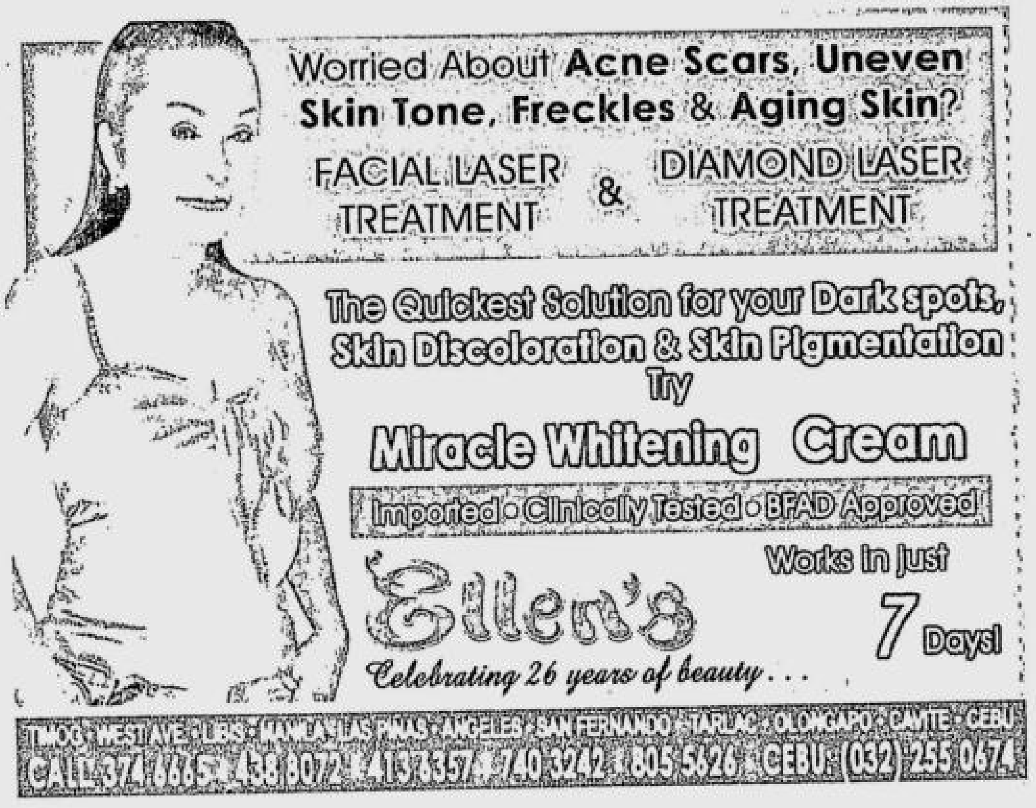

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DERAILED R13 1:10,3:30,5:50,8:10,10:30	WALK THE LINE PG13 1:20,4:10,7:00,9:50	FIRE WALL PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15

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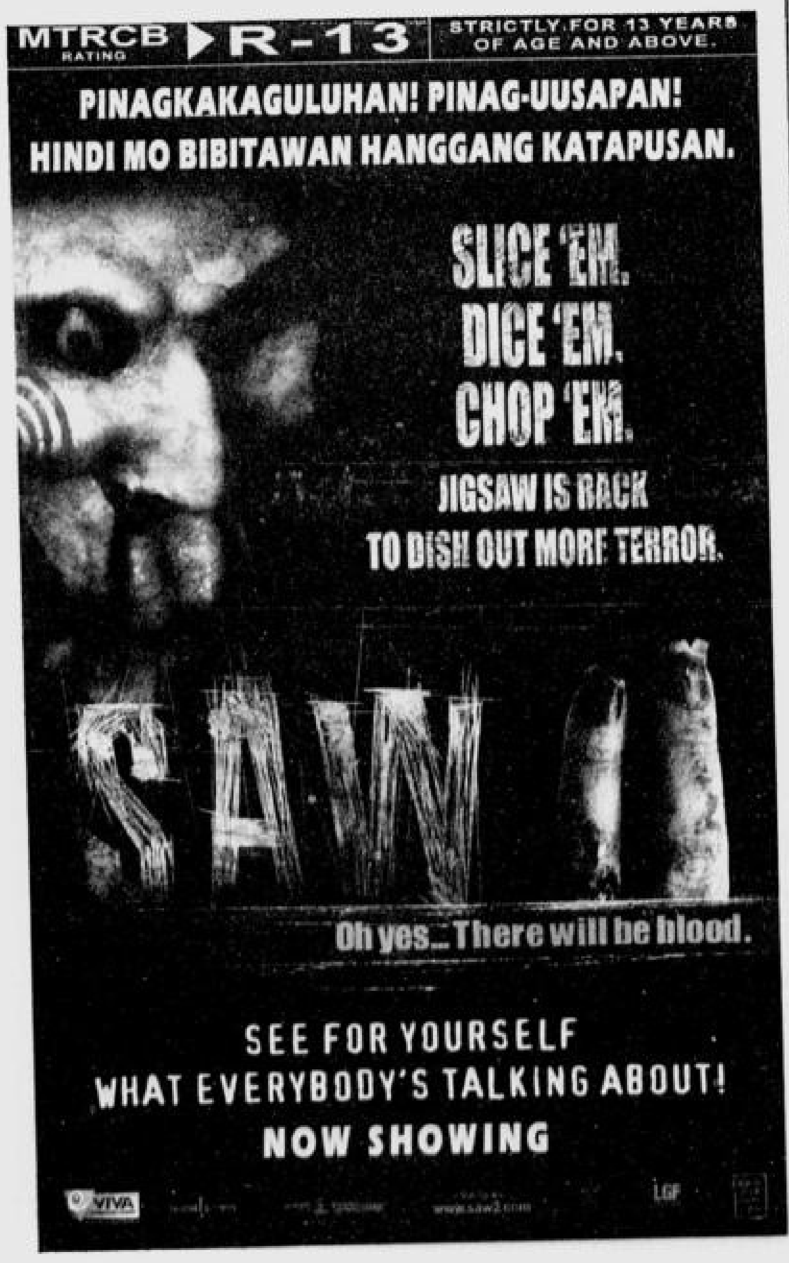

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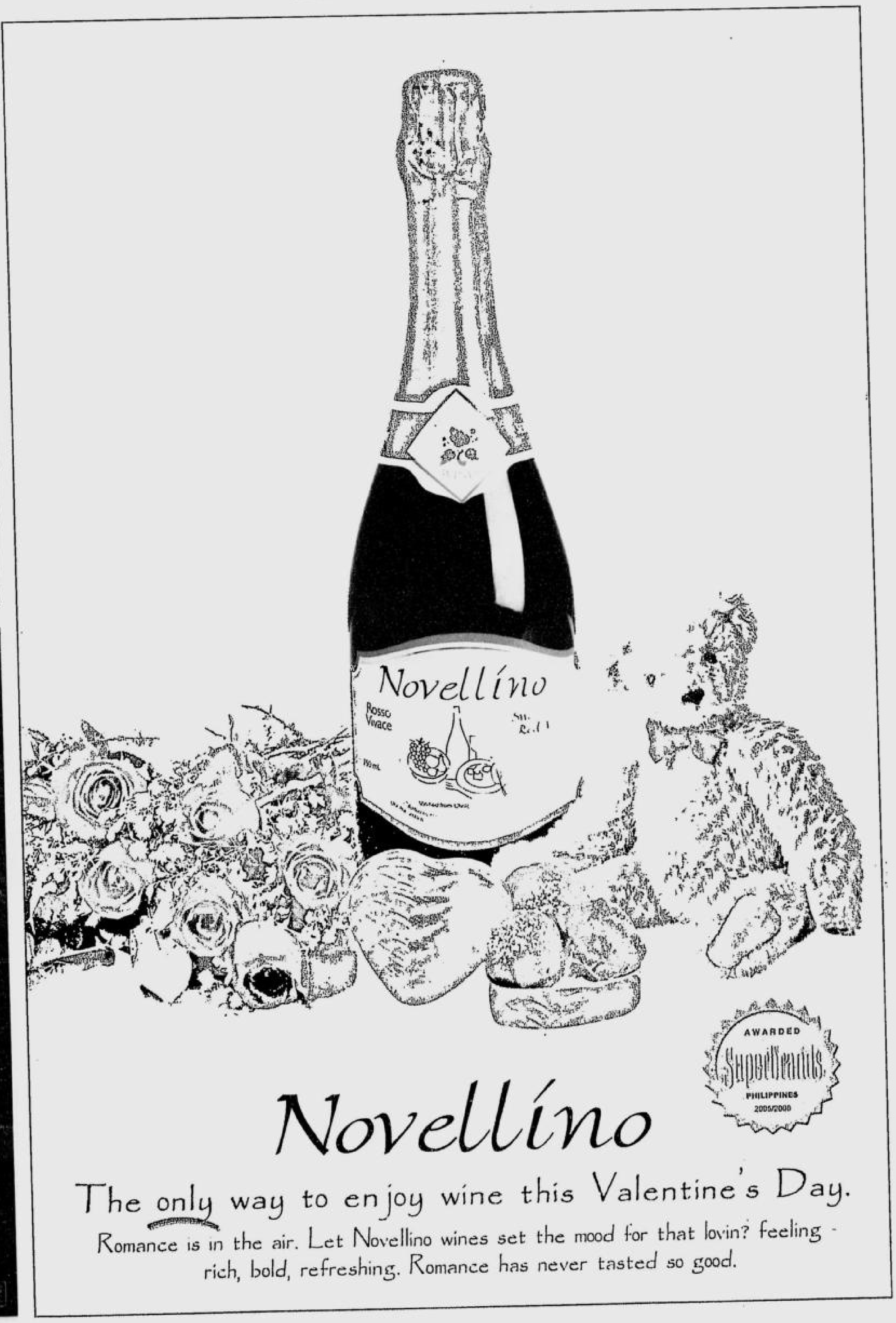

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Oscars season in New York

From page A2-1

Manhattan and is a proud graduate of New York University's film school.

Another Best Actor contender, Philip Seymour Hoffman, is a West Village fixture. Fittingly, he is nominated for playing another famous New Yorker, author Truman Capote.

Other prominent Gothamites on the ballot: Paul Giamatti (Best Supporting Actor), Frances McDormand (Best Supporting Actress) and Noah Baumbach (Best Original Screenplay).

Then there's the most iconic of New Yorkers—Woody Allen, nominated for his "Match Point" screenplay and considered the comeback story of the year.

Other films and key players in this year's races have connections to the city. Best Picture nominee "Good Night, and Good Luck" tackles 1950s journalism in the New York newsrooms of the CBS TV network. "Memoirs of a Geisha," directed by New York stage vet Rob Marshall, snagged six nods.

New Yorkers pride themselves in their blithe sophistication, glib insouciance and chic sense of irony. To them the Oscars—and LA—are the antithesis of New York glamour and panache, and a perfect illustration of the two cities' eternal rivalry.

For New Yorkers, Los Angeleños are, well, too tanned and/or too Botox-ed. There's an inherent cachet in coming from New York, an acknowledgement that you're somehow grittier, sturdier, more bullish. This also indicates less tolerance for crap, pretense and the frivolities of fame. New Yorkers, in the eyes of New Yorkers, are so much cooler and, natch, so are our celebs and Oscar nominees.

Who cares about West Coast's Bennifer II or TomKat or Vincifer Vaughniston when we've got Renee Zellweger (a recent Manhattan transplant), Meryl Streep, Hilary Swank, Sarah Jessica Parker, Matthew Broderick and Robert De Niro?

We don't blink when Lindsay Lohan struts her tabloid-happy derriere across SoHo to go on a shopping spree, or when Nicole Kidman is reportedly seen at the swanky Bette restaurant in Chelsea.

Equal rights

I once passed a man in midtown who looked like Guy Ritchie, and whaddaya know? It *was* Guy Ritchie. James Gandolfini, of "Sopranos" nearly bumped right into me at a local electronics store, and what was my first thought? That he looked a lot like the unfriendly guy from my local pizza shop around the corner.

At the end of the day, New Yorkers don't care whether you make $20 million per movie or get first dibs on those new Marc Jacobs platforms, or walk past the velvet ropes at hot spot Marquee.

As far as we're concerned, New York celebs are just like the rest of us, and we like cheering for the hometown folks because we see them as actual people. We walk on the same sidewalks, pass by the same homeless guy sleeping next to the subway entrance, smell the same garbage stench, hear the same deafening ambulance sirens, and try to avoid the same mobs of tourists who insist on monopolizing street corners by walking side by side.

And sc--w you if you pull some Hollywood power trip in New York! We have equal rights to that cab, that sidewalk space and that subway seat. Don't believe me? A friend of mine once sat next to Susan Sarandon.

So where will I be on Oscar night, March 5? I'll be home in Brooklyn watching New Yorkers step onto that West Coast red carpet with the effortless elan of an East Coast sophisticate. Whether or not the hometown folks win, here's something New Yorkers already know: When it comes to time zones, Oscar winners or anything else, New York is always ahead of the rest. Now, the envelope, please …

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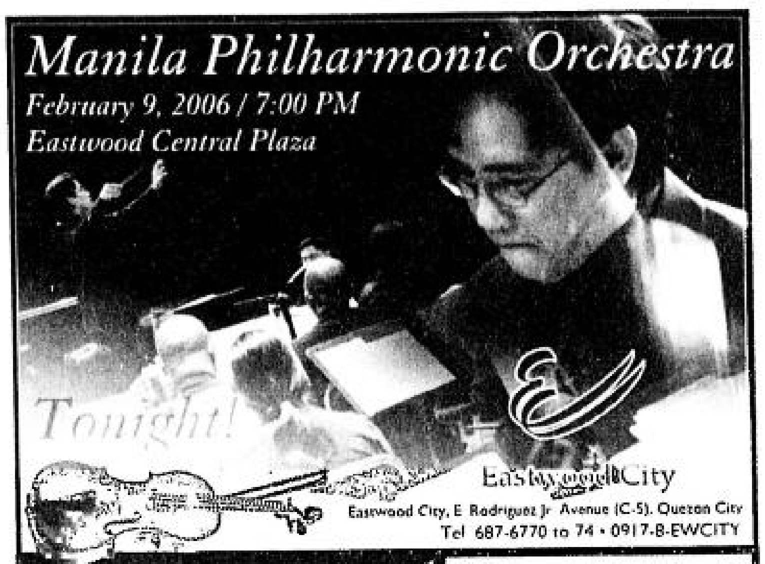
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2	FIREWALL 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 PG-13
3	MUNICH 1:05, 4:20, 7:40, 10:50 R-13
4	NEW WORLD 11:55, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:00

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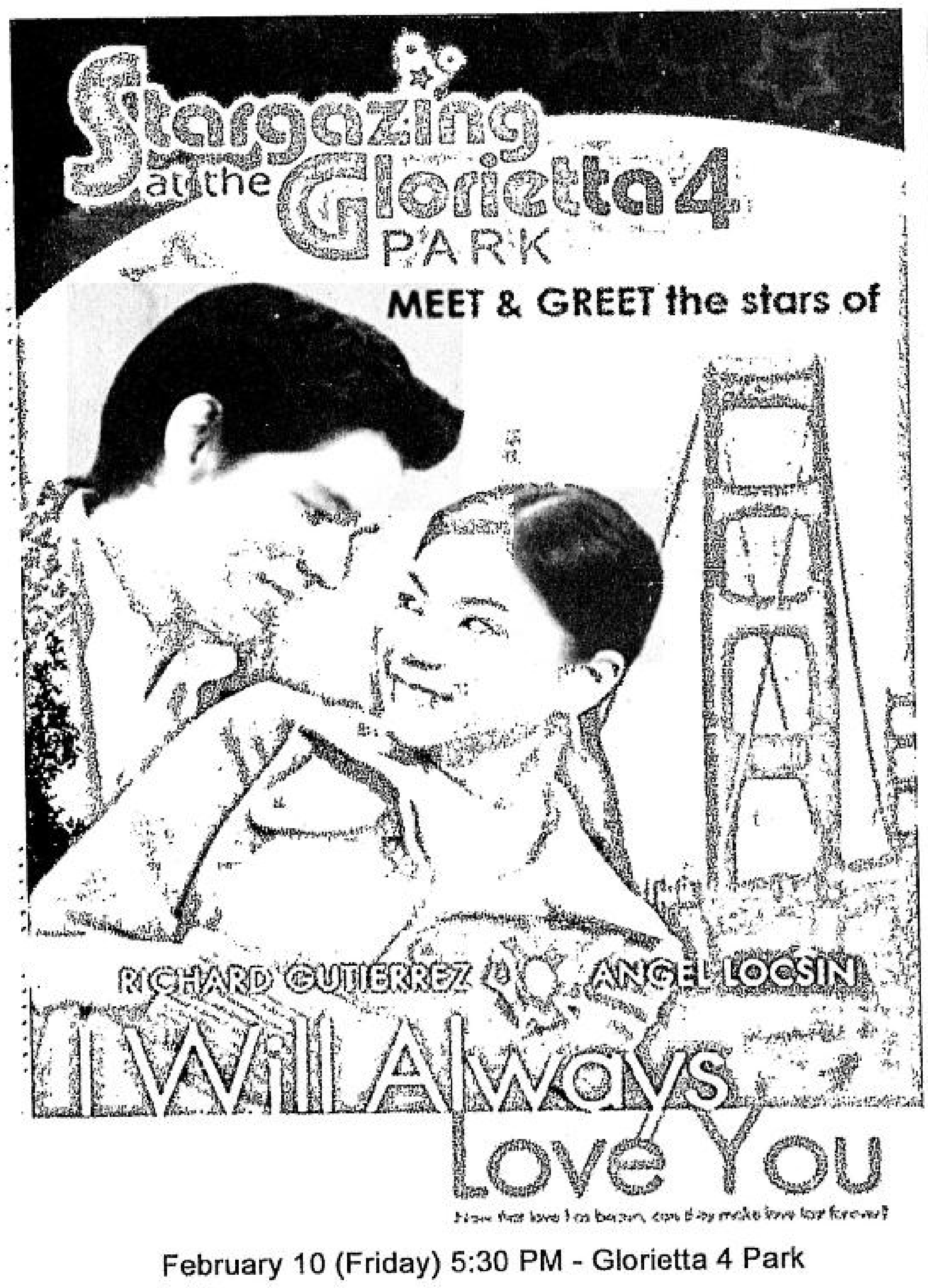
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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE 2005 ACADEMY AWARDS won't be handed out until next month, but this early, the Oscars bid fair to be **George Clooney**'s show. The movie hunk impressed the socks off everybody when he won three nominations for "Good Night and Good Luck," which he directed and co-wrote, and for his supporting performance in "Syriana."

Instructively enough, both films associated with Clooney have strong political content, proof positive that People magazines "Sexiest Man Alive" has gone way beyond his hunky start on TV and the movies.

"Good Night" dramatizes the role of media in a nation's life, and hits at threats against civil liberties, while "Syriana" explores the United States' intrusion in other countries' internal affairs.

Thus, Clooney now paces other political activists in using cinema to ask and answer some important and controversial questions that other filmmakers are afraid to touch.

We trust that both film people and viewers will be giving Clooney more respect from here on in! At age 44, Clooney must be breathing a sigh of relief that he now has a new, more substantial career thrust to pursue-and can give his old Hollywood Hunk image a good, long rest!

Another upbeat effect of the 2005 Oscar nominations announcement is the fact that it speeded up the local release of some productions.

For instance, "Walk the Line," which features the Oscar-nominated lead performances of **Joaquin Phoenix** and **Reese Witherspoon** as **Johnny Cash** and **June Carter**, respectively, has opened in theaters here.

And **Steven Spielberg**'s "Munich" opened yesterday, the better for local viewers to see if they agree or disagree with the US Academy that it's one of the five best movies of 2005.

Incidentally, Spielberg's movie also scores high marks in the political or political terrorism arena, because it's about the murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

Now, if only "Brokeback Mountain" and "Good Night and Good Luck" could also be rushed to our screens as soon as possible—and maybe "Crash" could be shown again—so local film buffs can participate more actively in discussions leading up to the Oscar awards next month.

Finally, we are excited to hear that the 2005 Oscar ceremonies will be hosted for the first time by Jon Stewart. The political satirist and pundit is a hoot on TV, so we hope that he'll score a direct hit in the Oscars, as well.

It's quite appropriate that Stewart is hosting this year's awards show, because of the relatively high political content of the entries. So, just watch him go to town with his smoking salvos.

But, when push comes to shove, he'll have to do anything and everything else to keep the show humming along, so he can get good marks when he's compared to the awards' best host to date, **Billy Crystal**.

REVIEW

Still sick

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

"SAW II," SEQUEL TO the hit 2004 slasher-fest, wastes no time in grossing out the audience.

In the first few minutes, we're immediately presented a gruesome death, refreshing the memory about the first film's jarring focus—extremely violent crimes.

The serial killer Jigsaw returns to torment more victims, but instead of just keeping two abductees in a filthy bathroom, he coerces eight people into escaping a booby-trapped house. It's pretty obvious that they will die in cruel and painful ways.

Those who saw the first movie will note that this one incorporates a more Hollywood bent.

Clichés

Which doesn't mean it's more watchable; the violence eventually desensitizes and feels more contrived. Many of the ideas have been recycled from the first film, but amplified. Several details degenerate into slasher-flick clichés.

But the script gives light to Jigsaw's motivations and severely twisted logic. This focus on the villain—played disarmingly, if a bit cheesily—by Tobin Bell, is a welcome highlight.

Even so, this sequel finishes a little weakly. New loose ends seem to have been created to be addressed in another sequel.

Overall, this isn't as shocking or brutal as expected, partly because of some scene deletions, but it still isn't a movie to be enjoyed with popcorn.

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FUN WITH DICK & JANE 1.00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
FIREWALL 11:50 / 2:20 / 4:50 / 7:20 / 9:50
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
MUNICH 11:50 / 3:00 / 6:10 / 9:20
WALK THE LINE 6:40 / 9:30
ZATHURA 1:00 / 3:10
FIREWALL 1:40 / 4:10 / 6:40 / 9:10
UNDERWORLD 2 12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40
CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 1:30 / 3:50
DERAILED 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40
SAW 2 5:50 / 7:50 / 9:50
ONLY P120 ADMISSION
GLOBE PLATINUM P24WP299

Ali MALL CINEMAS
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
BLOODRAYNE 12:15 / 2:15 / 4:15 / 6:15 / 8:15
2 FIREWALL 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:15
5 FUN WITH DICK & JANE 12:15 R2 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
6 THE NEW WORLD 12:00 / 2:50 / 5:40 / 8:30
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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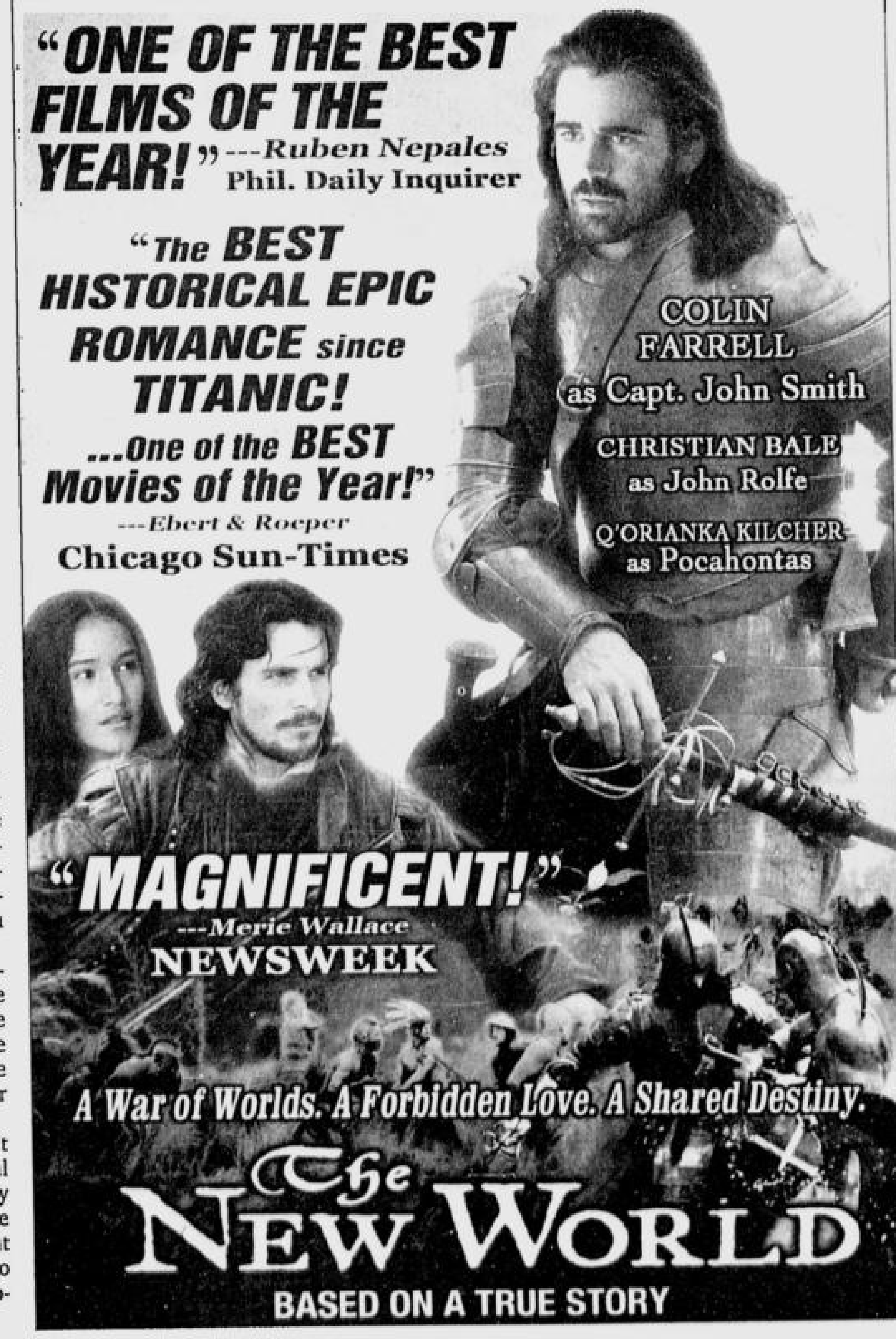
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2 FIREWALL
11:30FS / 11:55 MF / 02:10
03:56 LFS / 04:26 LMF / 06:10 END
MEGAMALL
1 FIREWALL
10:15 FS / 10:45 MF / 01:00 / 03:15 / 05:30
07:45 / 09:30 LFS / 10:00 LMF / 11:45 END
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1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30 / 03:30 / 05:30
09:05 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:05 END
2 FIREWALL
11:00 FS / 11:10 MF / 01:14 / 03:18 / 05:22 / 07:26
09:18 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:25 END
3 DERAILED
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30 / 03:30 / 05:30 / 07:30
09:20 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:20 END
movietime

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 FIREWALL
2 DERAILED
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 ZATHURA
6 NEW WORLD
7 SAW 2
8 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
9 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
10 UNDERWORLD 2
11 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
12 MUNICH

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 FIREWALL
2 MUNICH
3 NEW WORLD
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 SAW 2
7 UNDERWORLD 2
8 ZATHURA
9 BLOODRAYNE
10 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 FIREWALL
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 NEW WORLD

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FIREWALL
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 ZATHURA
2 BLOODRAYNE
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 FIREWALL
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 MUNICH
7 NEW WORLD
8 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
9 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
10 UNDERWORLD 2
11 SAW 2
12 DERAILED

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 NEW WORLD
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 FIREWALL
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 MUNICH
6 SAW 2
7 ZATHURA
8 UNDERWORLD 2
9 BLOODRAYNE
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 NEW WORLD
2 FIREWALL
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 MUNICH
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 SAW 2
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 BLOODRAYNE
7 FIREWALL
8 NEW WORLD

SM CITY MANILA
1 FIREWALL
2 NEW WORLD
3 SAW 2
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 BLOODRAYNE
7 MUNICH
8 ZATHURA
9 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
10 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
11 THE MAID
12 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 FIREWALL
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 SAW 2
5 NEW WORLD
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 FIREWALL
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 ZATHURA
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 UNDERWORLD 2

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FIREWALL

SM CITY BACOOR
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FIREWALL
4 NEW WORLD
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
7 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
8 BLOODRAYNE

SM CITY MARILAO
1 SAW 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 FIREWALL

SM CITY LUCENA
1 ZATHURA
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 RUMORHAS IT
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 SAW 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 LITTLE MANHATTAN

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 FIREWALL
3 DERAILED
4 DOMINO
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6 SAW 2
7 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
8 UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY ILOILO
1 LITTLE MANHATTAN
2 RESERVED
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 ZATHURA
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
7 RESERVED
8 THE MAID

SM CITY DAVAO
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 ZATHURA
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 THE MAID
5 RUMOR HAS IT
6 UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 ST. ANGE
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 LITTLE MANHATTAN

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AYALA CENTER
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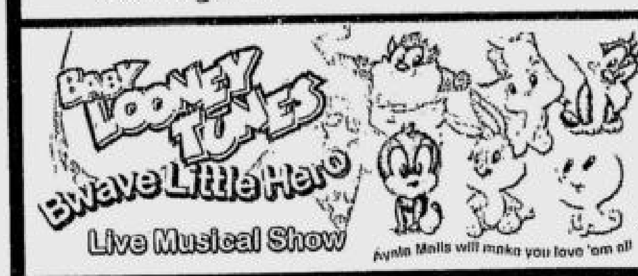

Glorietta Activity Center
Feb 17, 4pm & 7pm
Feb 18, 1pm & 6pm
Feb 19, 11am, 3pm & 6pm

Activity Center
Feb 24, 3pm & 6pm
Feb 25, 11am, 3pm & 6pm
Feb 26, 3pm & 6pm

Activity Center
March 1, 3pm & 6pm
March 2, 3pm & 6pm

Activity Center
March 4, 11am, 3pm & 6pm
March 5, 11am, 3pm & 6pm

Meet & greet after each show

[illegible]

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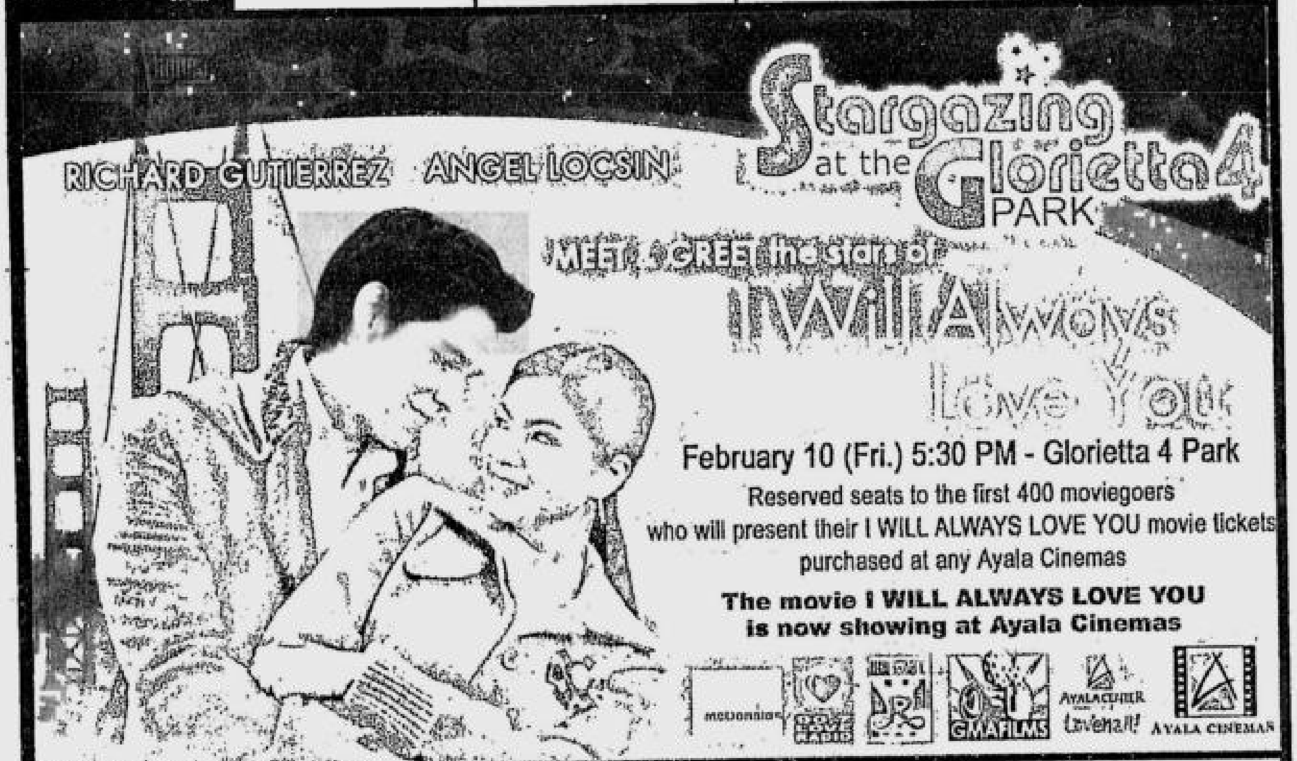
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G1 GLORIETTA 1	FIREWALL	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	FUN W/ DICK & JANE			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	THX THE NEW WORLD GUARANTEED SEATS	DERAILED	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2	FIREWALL	MUNICH
GB1 GREENBELT 1	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	FIREWALL					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX THE NEW WORLD GUARANTEED SEATS	THX WALK THE LINE GUARANTEED SEATS	DERAILED GUARANTEED SEATS	MUNICH GUARANTEED SEATS	FUN W/ DICK & JANE GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX FIREWALL	THE NEW WORLD	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	MUNICH	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	FIREWALL	FUN W/ DICK & JANE	SAW 2	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU			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① I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
② FUN WITH DICK & JANE
③ DERAILED
④ FIREWALL
⑤ THE NEW WORLD

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-075, Series of 2006

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GALLERIA 632-9116

- 1 MUNICH • THX
- 2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 3 SAW 2
- 4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 5 NEW WORLD
- 6 FIREWALL
- 7 BLOODRAYNE
- 8 UNDERWORLD 2
- 9 DERAILED
- 10 WALK THE LINE

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

- 1 NEW WORLD
- 2 SAW 2
- 3 BLOODRAYNE
  UNDERWORLD 2
- 4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 6 FIREWALL
- 7 MUNICH

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

- 1 MUNICH
- 2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 3 NEW WORLD
- 4 UNDERWORLD 2
- 5 WALK THE LINE
- 6 SAW 2
- 7 FIREWALL
- 8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

- 1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 2 FIREWALL
- 3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 4 UNDERWORLD 2
- 5 SAW 2
- 6 WALK THE LINE

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

- 1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 2 FIREWALL
- 3 RESERVE
- 4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

- 1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 2 NEW WORLD
- 3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 4 FIREWALL

CHECK THIS OUT ▸▸

ROBINSONS CINEMAS Novaliches

Now open!

Cinema 1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
Cinema 2 FIREWALL
Cinema 3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
Cinema 4 UNDERWORLD 2
Cinema 5 SAW 2
Cinema 6 WALK THE LINE

STA ROSA (049) 837-0907

- 1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 2 FIREWALL
- 3 UNDERWORLD 2
- 4 WALK THE LINE
- 5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

- 1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 2 HALF LIGHT
- 3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 4 THE MAID
- 5 LITTLE MANHATTAN

DASMARINAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

- 1 FIREWALL
- 2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 3 HALF LIGHT
- 4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 5 BLOODRAYNE

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

- 1 FIREWALL
- 2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 4 SAW 2

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-6188

- 1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 2 FIREWALL
- 3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 4 SAW 2
- 5 BLOODRAYNE

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

- 1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 3 SAW 2
- 4 ZATHURA
- 5 UNDERWORLD
- 6 FIREWALL

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

- 1 RUMOR HAS IT
- 2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 4 THE MAID
- 5 HALF LIGHT
- 6 DERAILED

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

- 1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
- 2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
- 3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
- 4 HALF LIGHT
- 5 THE MAID
- 6 UNDERWORLD 2

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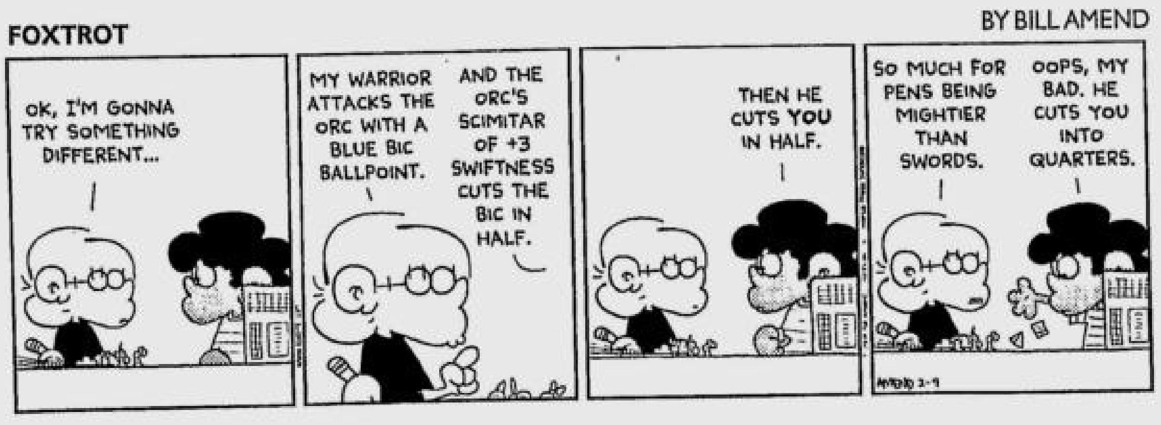
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2006
ComicRelief
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

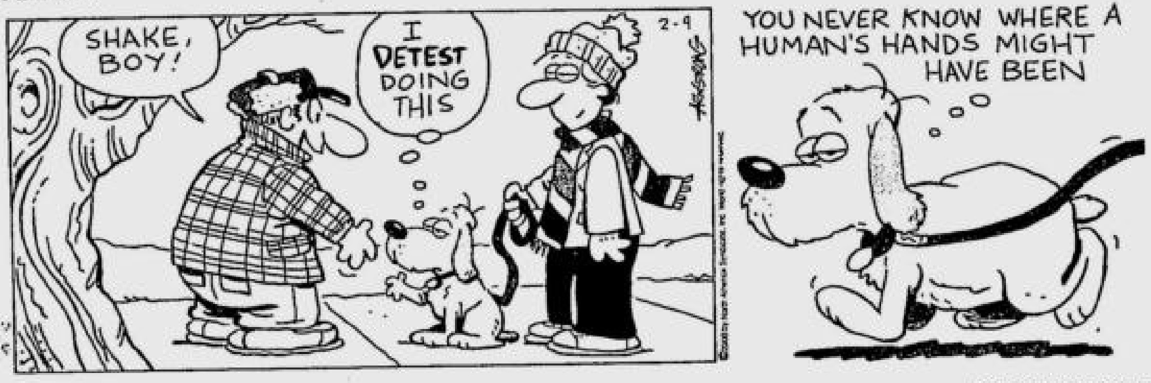
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


OK, I'M GONNA TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT...
MY WARRIOR ATTACKS THE ORC WITH A BLUE BIC BALLPOINT.
AND THE ORC'S SCIMITAR OF +3 SWIFTNESS CUTS THE BIC IN HALF.
THEN HE CUTS YOU IN HALF.
SO MUCH FOR PENS BEING MIGHTIER THAN SWORDS.
OOPS, MY BAD. HE CUTS YOU INTO QUARTERS.
AMEND 2-9

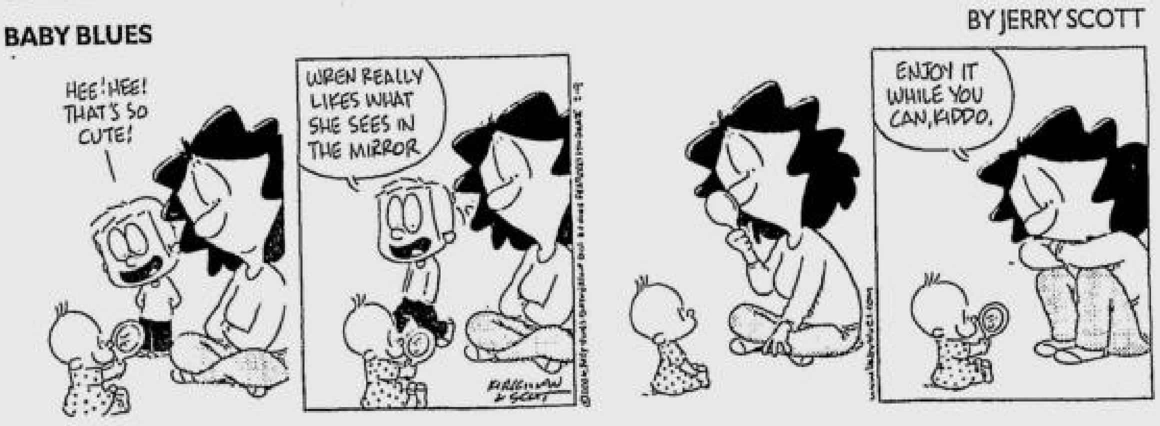
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


SHAKE, BOY!
I DETEST DOING THIS
2-9
YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE A HUMAN'S HANDS MIGHT HAVE BEEN

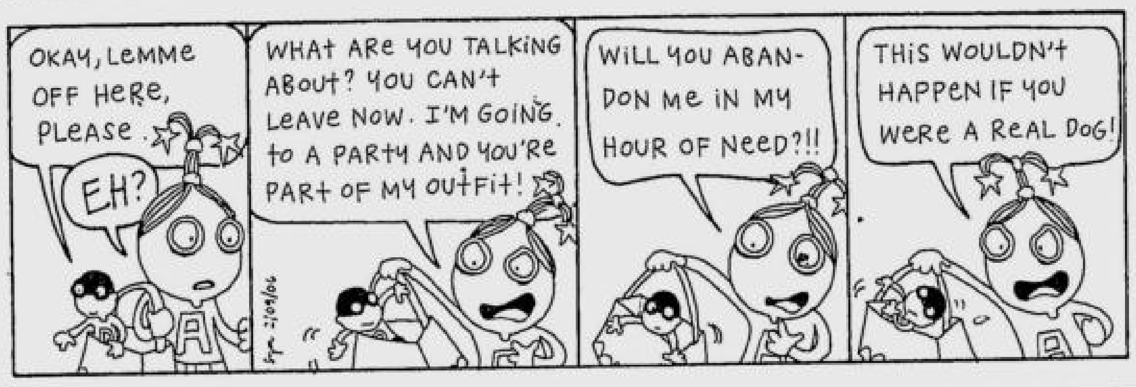
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HEE! HEE! THAT'S SO CUTE!
WREN REALLY LIKES WHAT SHE SEES IN THE MIRROR
ENJOY IT WHILE YOU CAN, KIDDO.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


OKAY, LEMME OFF HERE, PLEASE
EH?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU CAN'T LEAVE NOW. I'M GOING TO A PARTY AND YOU'RE PART OF MY OUTFIT!
WILL YOU ABANDON ME IN MY HOUR OF NEED?!!
THIS WOULDN'T HAPPEN IF YOU WERE A REAL DOG!
Lyra 2/09/06

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: People certainly remember you! You're colorful, entertaining and quite frank. Your spontaneity raises the spirits of everyone around you. And you don't just party. Oh no. You're a hard worker and extremely productive. You work hard and play hard! Expect exciting new avenues to open up for you in the year ahead. Be open to new and unexpected opportunities.

Birthdate of: Ziyi Zhang, actress; Travis Tritt, singer; Alice Walker, poet/author.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your focus is on home, family and domestic matters today. Something new and unexpected could cause a bit of friction with someone. However, by evening all is well.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a busy day! Conversations with neighbors, siblings and daily colleagues keep you hopping. Don't let others discourage you. By bedtime you're happy.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Money, finances and paying bills have your attention today. Keep track of your cash flow. Figure out what you owe and what you own. Information is power.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The Moon in your sign today makes you more emotional; however, it also energizes you! Things will go your way. Be patient with partners. Pleasure and romance favor you tonight. Ooh la la!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Try to hide today. You need some peace and quiet. Work by yourself if you can, or at least work behind the scenes. Keep a low profile.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Friends are important to you today. A conversation with someone in particular (perhaps a female friend) will matter. Discuss your dreams for the future.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Because the Moon is at the top of your chart, people will notice you today, no matter how briefly. Conversations with parents, VIPs and bosses are important. (Make sure you listen.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You feel restless today! You want a little adventure in your life. You also want to learn something new. To satisfy these urges, do something you've never done before (or go someplace different and new).

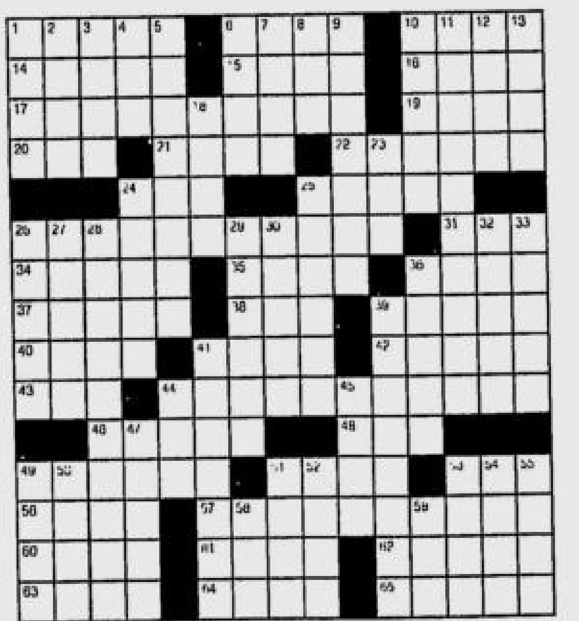
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): No matter what you do today, you'll feel things intensely! This is not an ideal day to figure out how to share things. Wait until tomorrow.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The Moon is opposite your sign today, and this draws your attention to others, especially partners and spouses. You have strong feelings but are hesitant to express them. By late evening, you're more relaxed.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18):7 Make every effort to get better organized today. This will please you if you do. Don't expect too much—be satisfied with whatever you achieve.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a fun-loving, flirtatious day! You want to play. Relax and enjoy friends. Time spent with children will also be rewarding.

DAILY CROSSWORD



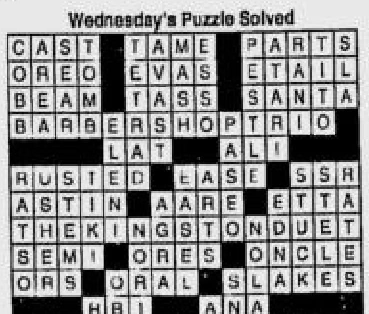
By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

2/9/06

ACROSS
1 Closes
6 Young equine
10 Writer's tools
14 Caste member
15 Inactive
16 Came down
17 Start of Evan Esar quote
19 Get up
20 May celebrant
21 Degrees for ABA members
22 Surpass in cunning
24 Roman gods
25 Thin band
26 Part 2 of quote
31 Some linemen: abbr.
34 Also known as
35 Roman tyrant
36 Radar spot
37 British weight
38 Easter item
39 Muse of poetry
40 "Bus Stop" playwright
41 CX minus III
42 Tortilla chip
43 Certain mil. installation
44 Part 3 of quote
46 "My Cherie ___"
48 Nothing at all
49 Waterborne
51 '60s rock musical
53 DDE's command
56 Describe
57 End of quote
60 Cosmetic ingredient
61 City on the Truckee
62 Past, present or future
63 Tenant's expense
64 Dutch cheese
65 "Easter 1916" poet

DOWN
1 Deceptive appearance
2 Ritz rival
3 E pluribus ___
4 6-pointers
5 Rent from a renter
6 Locate
7 Chances
8 The Greatest
9 African nation
10 Series starter
11 "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" co-star
12 Unless, in law
13 Proofer's mark
18 Arabic letter
23 Mary of "Where Eagles Dare"
24 Diplomat Silas
25 Garcia of golf
26 Cicero's language
27 Old-time actress Massey
28 Chinook
29 The nerve
30 Mr. Philbin
32 Church contribution
33 Place setting part
36 Melee
39 Sum total
41 High fashion
44 Region on the SW coast of India
45 College credit
47 Impressionist painter
49 Banned spray
50 Nail smoother
51 Maui tourist destination
52 Bit of physics
53 Writer Ferber
54 Exam
55 Poetic tributes
58 Composer Rorem
59 Born as

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved


CAST TAME PARTS
OREO EVAS ETAIL
BEAM TASS SANTA
BARBERSHOPTRIO
LAT ALI
RUSTED EASE SSH
ASTIN AARE ETTA
THEKINGSTONDUET
SEMI ORES ONCLE
ORS ORAL SLAKES
HBI ANA
THEJACKSONFOUR
ORALE ALPO ARLO
DORIC SEEP LANA
EDICT HENS ADAM

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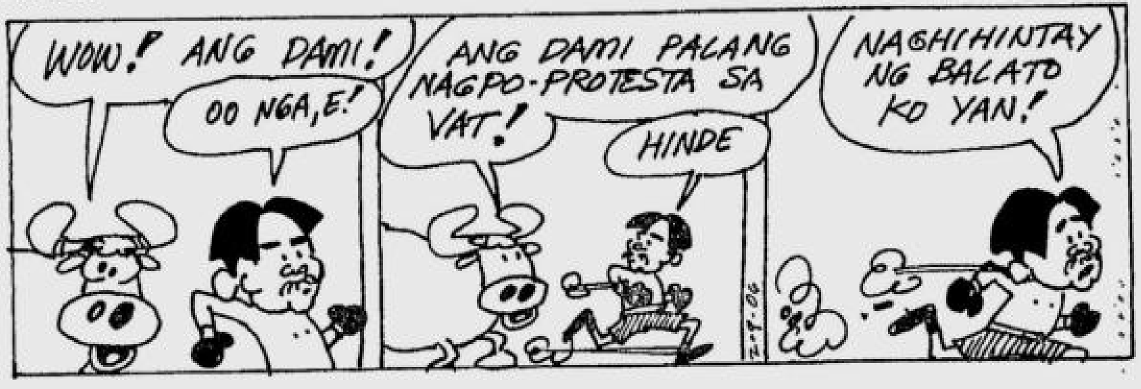
2/8/06

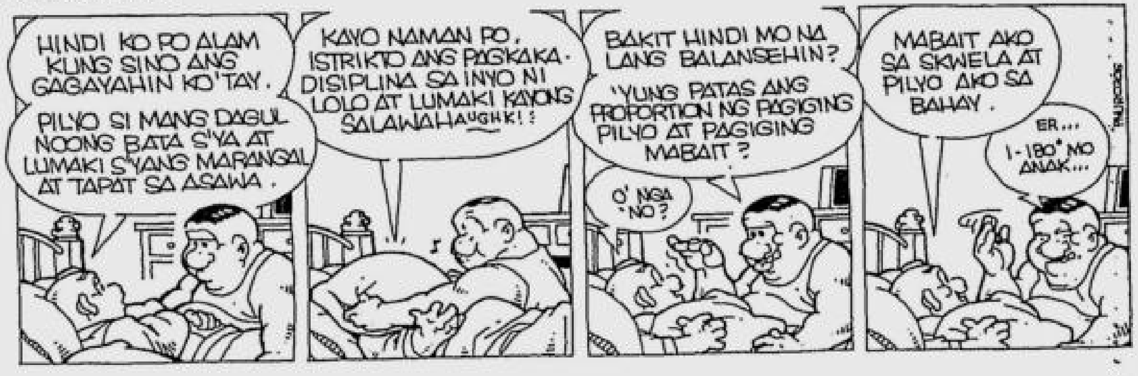
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WOW! ANG DAMI!
OO NGA, E!
ANG DAMI PALANG NAGPO-PROTESTA SA VAT!
HINDE
NAGHIHINTAY NG BALATO KO YAN!
2-9-06

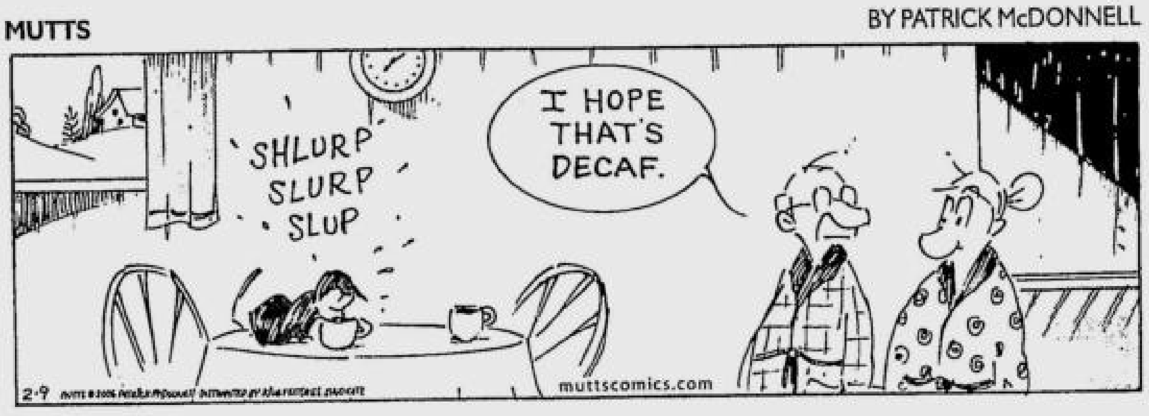
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HINDI KO PO ALAM KUNG SINO ANG GAGAYAHIN KO'TAY.
PILYO SI MANG DAGUL NOONG BATA S'YA AT LUMAKI S'YANG MARANGAL AT TAPAT SA ASAWA.
KAYO NAMAN PO, ISTRIKTO ANG PAGKAKA-DISIPLINA SA INYO NI LOLO AT LUMAKI KAYONG SALAWAHAUGHK!!
BAKIT HINDI MO NA LANG BALANSEHIN?
'YUNG PATAS ANG PROPORTION NG PAGIGING PILYO AT PAGIGING MABAIT?
O' NGA 'NO?
MABAIT AKO SA SKWELA AT PILYO AKO SA BAHAY.
ER... 1-180° MO ANAK...

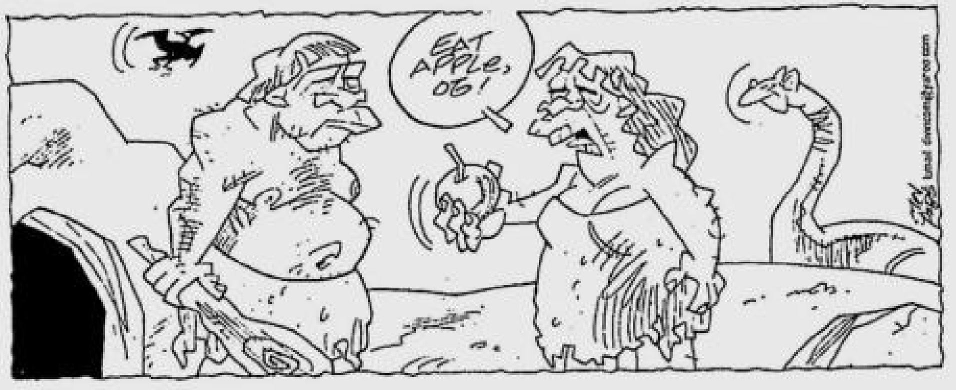
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHLURP SLURP SLUP
I HOPE THAT'S DECAF.
2-9
muttscomics.com

DIVINE COMEDY

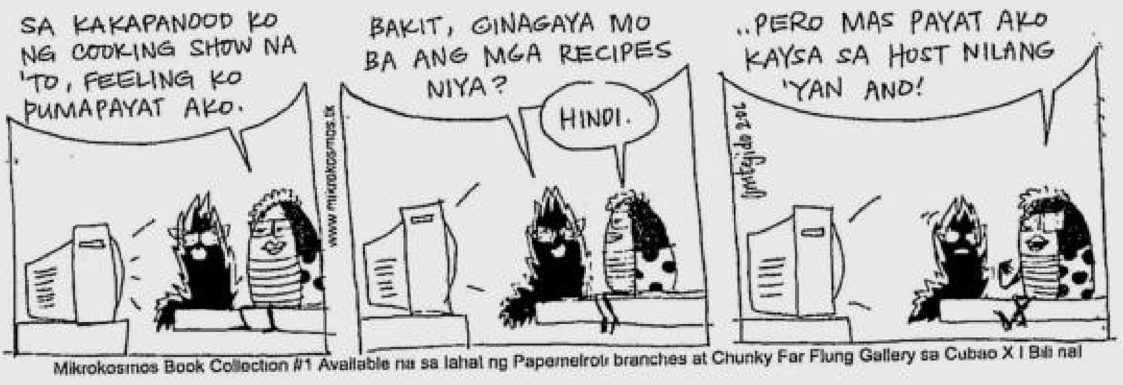
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


EAT APPLE, OG!

EVOLUTIONIST VERSION OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN STORY

MIKROKOSMOS

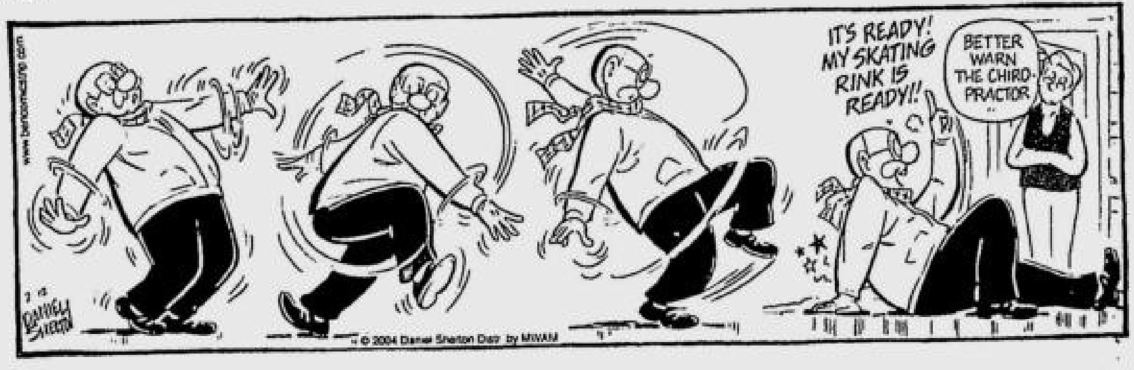
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SA KAKAPANOOD KO NG COOKING SHOW NA 'TO, FEELING KO PUMAPAYAT AKO.
BAKIT, GINAGAYA MO BA ANG MGA RECIPES NIYA?
HINDI.
..PERO MAS PAYAT AKO KAYSA SA HOST NILANG 'YAN ANO!
www.mikrokosmos.tk

Mikrokosmos Book Collection #1 Available na sa lahat ng Papemelroti branches at Chunky Far Flung Gallery sa Cubao X ! Bili na!

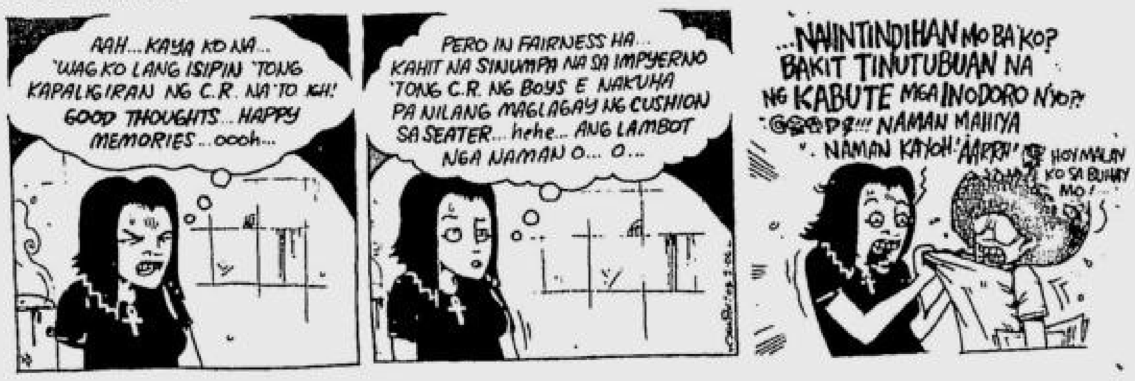
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


IT'S READY! MY SKATING RINK IS READY!!
BETTER WARN THE CHIROPRACTOR
© 2004 Daniel Shelton Distr. by MWAM

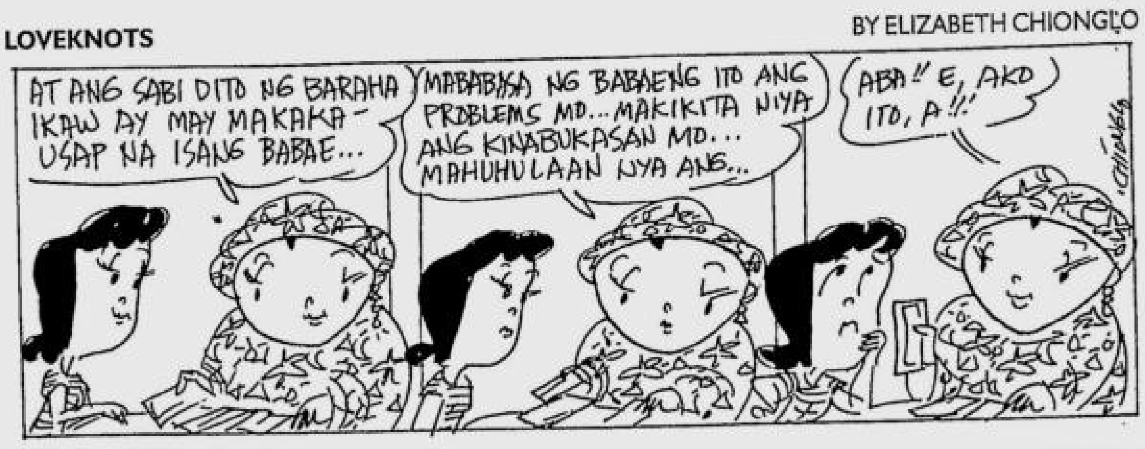
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


AAH... KAYA KO NA... 'WAG KO LANG ISIPIN 'TONG KAPALIGIRAN NG C.R. NA'TO KH! GOOD THOUGHTS... HAPPY MEMORIES... oooh...
PERO IN FAIRNESS HA... KAHIT NA SINUMPA NA SA IMPYERNO 'TONG C.R. NG BOYS E NAKUHA PA NILANG MAGLAGAY NG CUSHION SA SEATER... hehe... ANG LAMBOT NGA NAMAN O... O...
...NAIINTINDIHAN MO BA'KO? BAKIT TINUTUBUAN NA NG KABUTE MGA INODORO N'YO?! GOOD?!!! NAMAN MAHIYA NAMAN KAYO! 'AARRH'
HOY MALAY KO SA BUHAY MO!

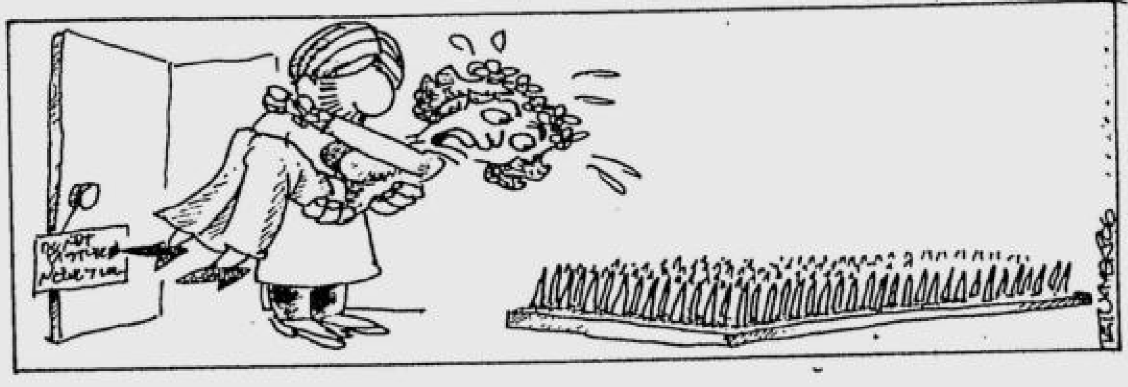
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


AT ANG SABI DITO NG BARAHA IKAW AY MAY MAKAKA-USAP NA ISANG BABAE...
MABABASA NG BABAENG ITO ANG PROBLEMS MO... MAKIKITA NIYA ANG KINABUKASAN MO... MAHUHULAAN NYA ANG...
ABA!! E, AKO ITO, A!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



6 celebs reveal what they did for love

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

EVEN AFTER AFTER THE "WOWOWEE" tragedy, Valentine-crazy Pinoys will still flock to jam-packed V-day concerts lined up for the *whole* month. Let's just hope that the red-letter day doesn't turn into a red alert day. Be that as it may, the romantic fool in me couldn't help cornering some stars for their Valentine thoughts. I asked them about the craziest thing they did for love. My own outrageous *l'amour* anecdotes are too many to mention. But just to get the ball rolling and the heart fluttering …

ASIA Agcaoili sent her boyfriend to school.

Once I waited for my BF (now ex) to come home after we had a terrible fight. For maximum impact, I laid down in front of their gate. He almost run me over!

Now it's the stars' turn to get silly and mushy. Valentine's gives us all the perfect excuse to be that way, 'huh?

Ruffa Mae Quinto: I'm a martyr when I'm in love. The first time I cried on TV because I was so hurt and didn't care what people would say, was the *pinakabaliw* thing that I did because of love.

Ogie Alcasid: Travelling for two days straight due to flight delays just to be with my love is the most insane thing I ever did.

Asia Agcaoili: I enrolled my boyfriend in a good university and paid for everything in the hope of having a bright future with him but we didn't end up together. What could be crazier than that?

Mark Herras: When I was still with Jennylyn [Mercado], I filled up her whole house with rose petals on our anniversary.

Maegan Aguilar: Shuttling between Munich and Manila many times over all in the name of love.

Juris Fernandez (MYMP): Let's just say that I have fallen head over heels in love so many times—when will I ever learn?

Christine & Mark?

PAMPANGA governor **Mark Lapid** was **Christine Reyes'** special guest during her 17th bday bash. He gave her *lechon* and a bottle of Patron tequila. I asked Christine if she thinks Mark is boyfriend material. She smiled and said, "Oh yeah! He's nice, not just to me, but to everybody. We're both adventurous *kaya* click *kami*!"

I have my own outrageous anecdotes

Will love be their next adventure? Hopefully it won't be a misadventure if her sis, **Ara Mina,** puts her foot down again (like she did about **Keempee de Leon** on account of age difference. "Age doesn't matter" or "Sister knows best?" Pick the correct answer, birthday girl!

FrancisM's sentiments

IN THE AFTERMATH of the "Wowowee" incident, ever wonder how people from the other side of the fence—GMA 7's "Eat Bulaga"—are dealing with it? I asked my "forever young" **FrancisM** (one of "Bulaga's" hosts) about his sentiments. He sighed and replied, "All of us over here at 'Eat Bulaga' felt very sad. We prayed before the show started on Saturday. It's just too bad that, I think, there was lack of security. That whole tragedy was preventable. It wasn't *force majeur*. If a million pesos was at stake, what's a few hundred thousands thrown in for extra security, communications, policemen, crash barricades and bouncers? I am familiar with stampedes because they almost always happen in rock concerts."

RUFA MAE Quinto wept on nationwide TV.

I can almost hear Kiko rapping, "Impede stampede! Stomp, stomp it out!"

CANDY Pangilinan

Candy's back

AFTER being away from the limelight for a while, top comedienne **Candy Pangilinan** is back—and looking for a Valentine. Known for her razor sharp wit and hilarious interpretations, Candy is set to take the Music Museum by story on Feb. 15 via her comedy concert, "Candy's be Love?" She will perform several side-splitting sketches of women in their quest for true love. Tickets at the gate.

Faces of love

THE SEQUEL of last year's hit Valentine concert, "Faces of Love" featuring **Gary Valenciano** and **Zsa Zsa Padilla** goes onstage Feb. 18 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 19, 7 p.m., at the NBC Tent, Bonifacio Global City in Taguig. Tickets available at Ticketworld/National Bookstore branches. Call 891-9999.

Retro Groove tilt

AMATEUR groups composed of three to five members (male and female), aged 15 and above may join The Brick Road's Retro Groove competition. Repertoire should consist of songs from the 1960s to the '70s. Entry forms available at the Ad & Promo Department of Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall (Marcos Highway, Cainta). Only the first 25 groups to submit complete requirements will qualify for the elimination round which starts March 4. Call 681-5401 loc. 109.

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com)

ROUNDUP

Seiko starrer

SUSAN ROCES IS "NEGOTIATING" WITH SEIKO Films to do a movie about the empowerment of women.

Roces, 64, widow of 2004 presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., was a popular actress in the 1960s. She appeared in blockbuster movies produced by Sampaguita Pictures, the company that discovered her.

Seiko Films producer Robbie Tan told INQUIRER Entertainment on Tuesday that the yet untitled drama-comedy, based on a script by Jose Javier Reyes, would have Roces in the role of martyr housewife to Eddie Garcia's domineering macho husband.

On the eve of their 40th wedding anniversary which their children—played by Diana Zubiri, Cherrie Pie Picache and Tirso Cruz III—have been preparing for, Roces' character decides to leave her husband.

"This is a refreshing role for Susan," Tan said. "But we are still negotiating."

Reyes is also directing the movie, according to Tan.

Roces' last film was 2003's "Mano Po 2," from Regal Entertainment.

Nini Valera

US box-office

LOS ANGELES— "When a Stranger Calls," the fright-film remake about a baby sitter menaced by a telephone stalker, dialed in as the top weekend movie with a $21.6-million debut.

The top 10 movies at US and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, according to Exhibitor Relations, official box-office trackers:

(1) "When a Stranger Calls," $21.6M; (2) "Big Momma's House 2," $13.6M; (3) "Nanny McPhee," $9.7M; (4) "Brokeback Mountain," $6M; (5) "Hoodwinked," $5.3M;

(6) "Underworld: Evolution," $5.3M; (7) "Something New," $4.8M; (8) "Annapolis," $3.4M; (9) "Walk the Line," $3.2M; (10) "The Chronicles of Narnia: the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," $3M.

AP

Atienza's life

FEATURED tonight on "Maalaala Mo Kaya" is the life story of Lito Atienza, mayor of Manila. The episode directed by Mae Cruz and written by Arlene Tamato stars Dante Rivero and Diether Ocampo.

It is set in 1950s Manila. Lito grows up under the shadow of his father Pepe, a community leader who is running for office. Don Pepe twice fails to capture the councilor's seat he is aiming for, but his struggles and principles become an inspiration for his son.

Also in the cast are Raquel Villavicencio, Karlyn Bayot, Julio Pacheco, Andrea Torres and Theo Bernardos. Charo Santos-Concio hosts.

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
8th floor Shangrila Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 833.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) FUN WITH DICK AND JANE PG13
2 (DOLBY) FIREWALL PG13
3 (DOLBY) MUNICH R13
4 (DOLBY) DERAILED R13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) THE NEW WORLD PG13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) UNDERWORLD-2
2 (SDDS) BLOODRAYNE
3 (DTS) ZATHURA
4 GOLD (DTS) FIREWALL
5 GOLD (DOLBY) THE NEW WORLD
6 GOLD (SDDS) MUNICH
7 GOLD (DOLBY) FUN W/ DICK & JANE
8 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
9 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
10 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 (DOLBY) FIREWALL
3 (DOLBY) MUNICH
4 (DOLBY) NEW WORLD

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 FIREWALL
2 (DTS) I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
4 FUN W/ DICK & JANE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
3 (DTS) FIREWALL
4 FUN W/ DICK & JANE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 THE MAID
2 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 (DOLBY) ZATHURA

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 THE MAID
2 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 (DOLBY) ZATHURA
4 (DTS) RUMOR HAS IT

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 (DOLBY) I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan)
1 DERAILED
2 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 FIREWALL
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 MUNICH

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) FIREWALL
2 (DOLBY) FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 (DOLBY) I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) FIREWALL
2 MUNICH
3 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 THE NEW WORLD
5 FUN W/ DICK & JANE

starmall EDSA SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FUN W/ DICK & JANE

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 DERAILED
3 PLEASE CALL
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 TUKSO

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 TUKSO
2 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
4 BLOODRAYNE

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 THE MAID

Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 DERRAILED
2 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) TUKSO
2 SAW-2
3 PAKAWALANG PUSO
4 (DTS) PLEASE CALL

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 (DTS EX) FIREWALL
4 THE MAID

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 TUKSO
3 (DTS) FIREWALL
4 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 UNDERWORLD-2

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3026
1 DERAILED
2 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 RUMOR HAS IT

Cine Nepo (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FIREWALL
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
4 (DTS) RESERVED

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 LOLIPOP & ROSES
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 THE MAID
4 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271
1 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cine Nepo (Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 ZATHURA
3 (DOLBY) THE MAID
4 (DTS) RUMOR HAS IT

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 TUKSO
2 SAW-2

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 KING KONG

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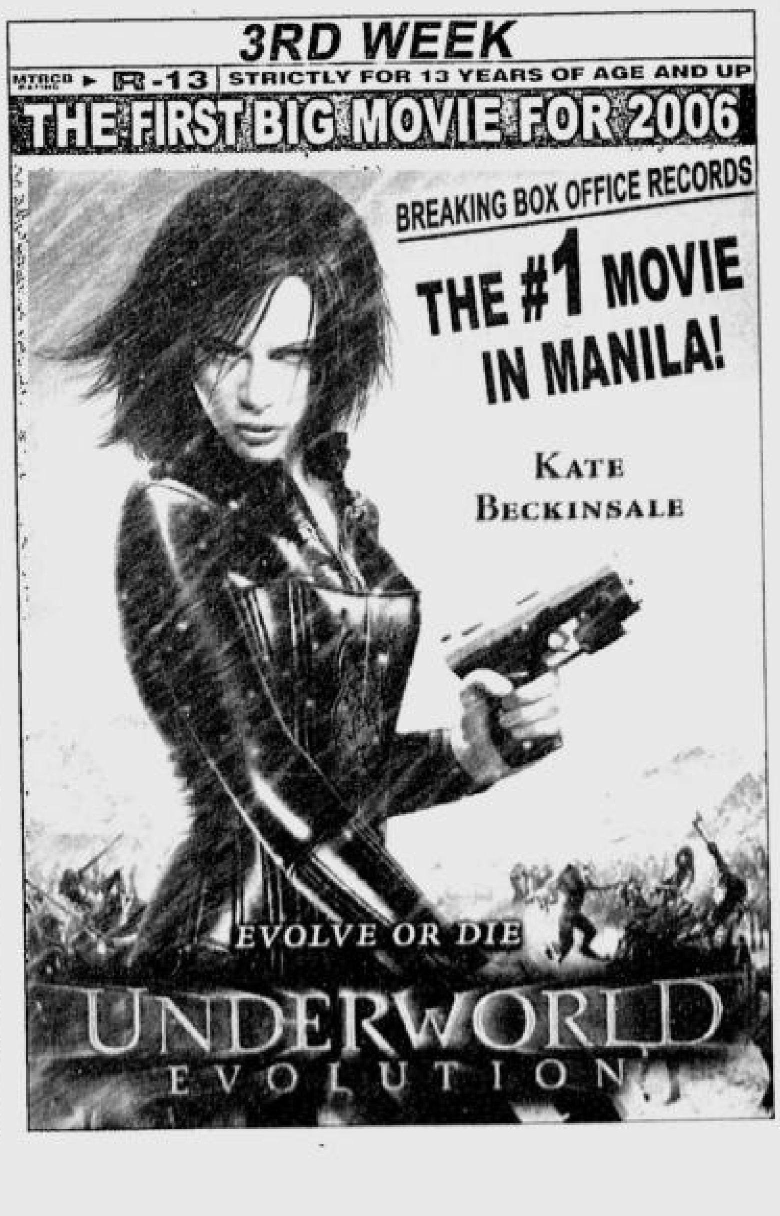
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 MUNICH 10:30 , 1:20 , 4:25, 7:30 , 10:30 R13
CINEMA 2 FUN WITH DICK & JANE 11:00 , 1:45 , 4:25, 7:05 , 9:45 PG13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND EX
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 NEW WORLD 11:00 , 1:55 ,4:45, 7:35 , 10:25 PG13
CINEMA 4 FUN WITH DICK & JANE 11:40 , 2:20 ,5:00, 7:40 , 10:20 PG13
CINEMA 5 FIREWALL 11:40 , 2:20 ,5:00, 7:40 , 10:20 PG13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM
FEBRUARY 3 & 4 NINA & NYOY 9PM
FEBRUARY 10,11 &13 VINA M. , RACHEL A. & GENEVA C. 8:30PM

T·E·A·T·R·I·N·O PROMENADE GREENHILLS
FEBRUARY 10,2006 BOBBY SOUL 9PM
FEBRUARY 11,2006 SIDE A 9PM
FEBRUARY 13 & 14 JAZZ YOU , JAZZ ME ISABELLA & RICHARD MERCK 9PM
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

2ND RIB-TICKLING FUN DAY
MTRCB RATING ▷ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
Jim Carrey Téa Leoni
Fun with Dick and Jane
Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES



3RD WEEK
MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP
THE FIRST BIG MOVIE FOR 2006
BREAKING BOX OFFICE RECORDS
THE #1 MOVIE IN MANILA!
KATE BECKINSALE
EVOLVE OR DIE
UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION

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Assistant Editor **Corrie S. Narisma**

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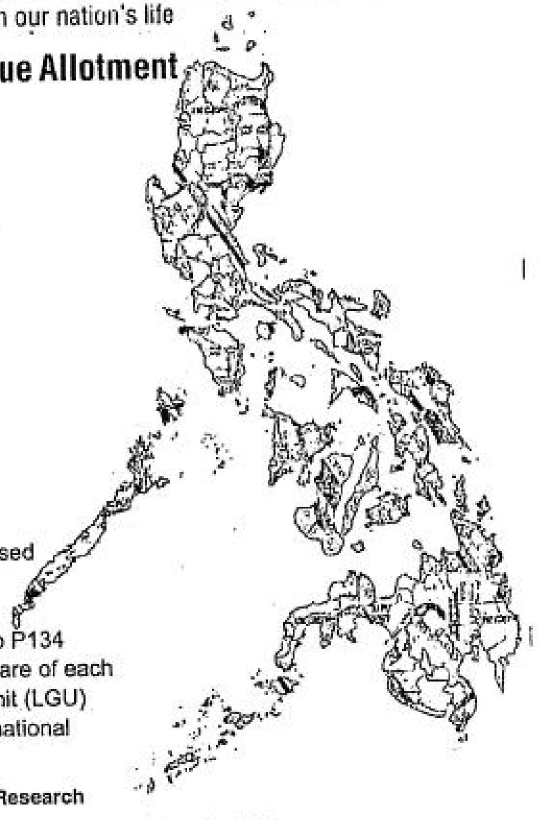
Figures that matter in our nation's life

Internal Revenue Allotment FY 2006



Allocation to LGUs:	
Provinces	P 30.8B
Cities	30.8
Municipalities	45.6
Barangays	26.8
	P134.0B

For 2006, the proposed internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) is up nine percent to P134 billion. IRA is the share of each local government unit (LGU) In the proceeds of national taxes.

Chona Galang PDI Research

Source: Budget of Expenditures and Sources of Financing 2006

Company execs puzzled by steep drop in stock price

By Daxim L. Lucas and Clarissa S. Batino

CLOSE TO P20 BILLION WORTH OF SHAREHOLDERS' VALUE IN Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) was wiped out in a single trading session yesterday as the company reeled from a downgrade by US-based investment firm Morgan Stanley.

The share price of the country's biggest listed firm plunged by 6.1 percent during frenetic trading on the Philippine Stock Exchange, ending at P1,680 apiece from the previous day's close of P1,790—a drop of P110 per share.

This reduced PLDT's market value to P303.9 billion from P323.8 billion in a single day.

Company officials were puzzled by the huge sell-off for the second straight day. PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan said he did not know of anything "now or prospectively" that could have triggered yesterday's huge drop.

In fact, he said PLDT's revenues in January were better compared to the same period last year. Profits in 2005, according to Pangilinan, were more than P30 billion, another record high.

"Will all these positive developments, the market is behaving irrationally," he said.

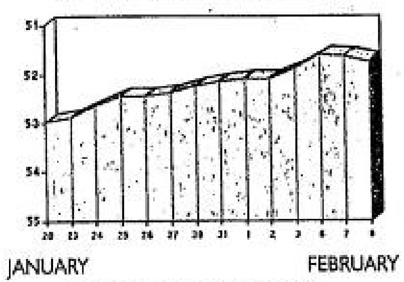
Stock market sources said the sharp drop might have been aggravated by a massive sell-off by creditors of subsidiary Pilipino Telephone Corp., many of which have begun converting their PLDT preferred shares into common shares as early as three weeks ago.

A day earlier, Morgan Stanley issued a research note downgrading PLDT to "equal-weight" from "overweight," saying that the stock now had limited upside potential "after a strong rally in the shares [over] the past two years."

P20B WORTH/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 51.765 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 8, 2006

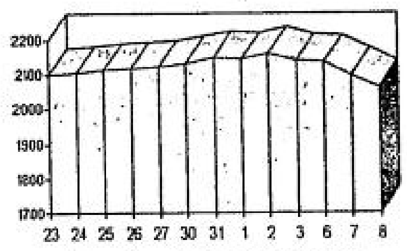
¥ 117.86 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 8, 2006

GOLD: $548.10-548.60

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 8, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks down 1.74%

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.74 percent lower yesterday as continued heavy selling in PLDT sparked profit-taking elsewhere, dealers said.

They said a 15-minute trading suspension due to a technical glitch also dampened investor sentiment while falls elsewhere in the region had added to the negative tone.

The composite index fell 36.46 points to 2,060.92 after trading between 2,044.58 and 2,097.38. Volume reached 1.01 billion

STOCKS/ B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

Perez clinches SMIC directorship /B2

$1.4B needed to put up new power plants in Luzon /B5

Peso retreats on credit-rating worries

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY RETREATed from three-year highs on concerns that Moody's, the most pessimistic among global credit-rating agencies, may not improve its outlook on the Philippines despite recent progress on fiscal reforms.

Currency traders also said the local currency fell to as low as 51.80 before closing at 51.765 yesterday from Tuesday's finish of 51.65 as the market anticipated the tailend of First Gen Corp.'s initial public offering.

But talks that Moody's Investor Service would likely keep its "negative" outlook on the sovereign credit rating—which meant that a downgrade is still possible over the near term—also prompted some traders to dump the peso in favor of the greenback.

The local currency, Asia's best performing currency last year when it rose by about 6 percent, thus bucked the uptrend among regional currencies yesterday.

A foreign bank trader said if Moody's would indeed keep the country on a negative watch, the peso's upward momentum might be spoiled. The local currency has now lost ground against the US dollar for two straight days.

The peso has rallied to a high of 51.57:$1 earlier this week on strong equity inflows and rosier sentiment on the country's economic fundamentals.

"The market has already factored in an improvement in the ratings," the trader said. "If this doesn't happen, the peso could fall back to 52.50 to 53 but definitely it's not going back to 56."

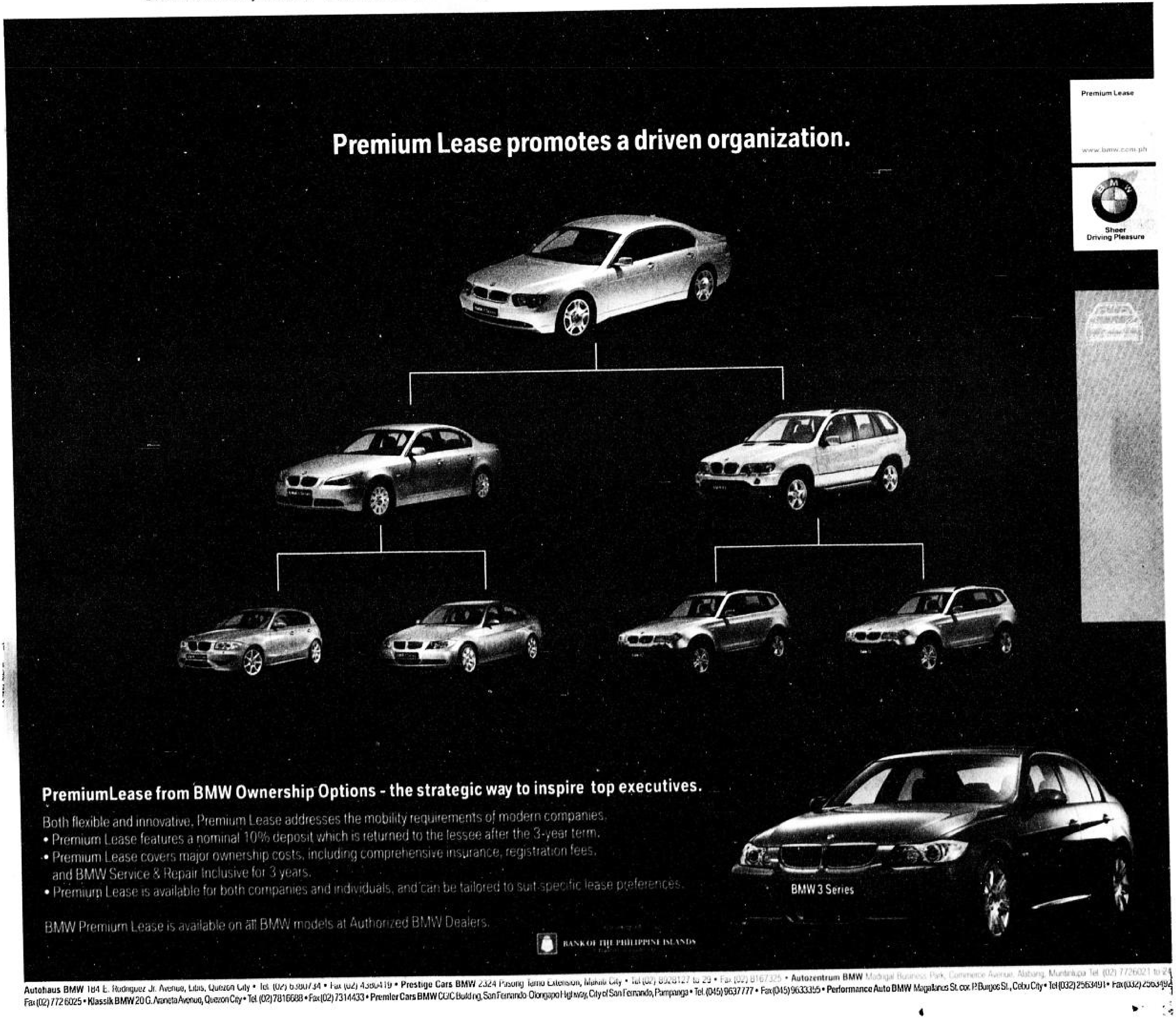
A source from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said Moody's has not yet finalized its latest assessment on the country.

"We're still preparing some data for them to include in their report," the source said. The source said there was still a chance that Moody's would give the country a more favorable rating.

Moody's rates the Philippines' long-term foreign-currency debt at four notches below investment grade while Standard & Poor's Ratings Services and Fitch Ratings rate the country at two and three notches below.

These rating agencies all placed Philippine credit on a "negative" watch last year after

PESO/ B2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Ex-Cabinet man joins SMIC board

Vince Perez replaces former trade official in SM holding firm

By Daxim L. Lucas

TWO FORMER RANKING OFFICIALS OF THE Arroyo administration have joined the board of holding firm SM Investments Corp. (SMIC), the company said yesterday.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, SMIC executive vice president Jose I. Sio announced the appointment of Vicente S. Perez Jr. as an independent director of the company.

An investment banker by training, Perez served as secretary of the Department of Energy from 2001 to 2004. Prior to the Energy post, he served briefly as undersecretary for industry and investments at the Department of Trade and Industry. Also, he used to be managing head of the Board of Investments.

Perez replaces Gregory L. Domingo as the independent director of the Henry Sy-owned holding firm. He will also head the firm's audit committee which Domingo used to chair.

Domingo—who also served in government as undersecretary of Trade and Industry—was appointed by the SMIC board as executive director of the firm.

Their appointments were formalized in a board meeting held yesterday, Sio said.

SMIC is the holding company of the SM Group, one of the country's largest conglomerates, with a market capitalization of over P117 billion. Its business interests include SM Prime Holdings Inc., which operates 20 SM supermalls all over the country.

SMIC also has under its ambit SM department stores, holdings in Banco de Oro Universal Bank and China Banking Corp., and interests in real estate development.

SMIC's shares were last traded on the stock market at P220 apiece.

Weird from our sponsor

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

JUST BETWEEN US GIRLS, THE SM GROUP of mall operator Henry Sy withdrew millions of pesos worth of ads from this newspaper.

It's a shade of the "boycott" which, as "punishment" some years ago, the bright boys of the man named Band ... Wrist Band ... imposed upon us. And we are still standing—thank you—alive and kicking.

With this usual scare-the-media "boycott" tactic, it's hard to say if the SM group only wants to cut on advertising expenses.

It's just that the SM group has this disgusting design to take over the country's third largest bank, Equitable PCIB, without spending a single centavo. It so happens that our pension funds—the SSS and the GSIS—invested P20 billion in the bank.

And so this column must report and comment on the takeover. We believe it is bad for the pension funds. Somebody in the SM group apparently does not tolerate dissent.

* * *

WHILE the SM group is embroiled in this trouble, word has been going around in big business concerning the, er, "godfather," of the takeover.

Now comes a word from our sponsor: Somebody related to Gloriaetta—known to stay in a plush subdivision in Makati—now stands as the sponsor of Tessie Sy for this weird deal.

Tessie is the eldest among the six Sy siblings and the main architect of the takeover.

The "godfather," who also sits in the board of a financial group that was said to have problems with the SEC, is also one of the backers of SSS boss Cora "Travel Girl" de la Paz.

Being unashamedly in favor of the takeover, De la Paz is the most popular (at least to SSS members) among Tessie Sy's backers in the Equitable PCI board.

Another backer of De la Paz is said to be a finance man who just recently became part of this cute administration of Gloriaetta. (He looks like Finance Secretary Margarito "Gary" Teves, if I'm not mistaken.)

Do you think that insiders in this cute administration are trying to put one over Gloriaetta? Or do you think she knows about the deal all along? It's hard to say, because there is no official word from the Palace whatsoever.

* * *

IN OTHER countries, they do not allow the owners and representatives of a COMPETING bank—much less a bank with the intent of taking over another—to sit on the board of another publicly listed bank like Equitable PCI. Not here, boss.

Here, the so-called "conflict of interest," featuring the SM group in Equitable PCIB, is so obvious. The Bangko Sentral does not even bother to protect our interest, as SSS and GSIS members.

Granted that we are powerless SSS and GSIS members, Equitable PCIB nevertheless is still a listed company. There are other stockholders. They are at the losing end when a competing bank, like Banco de Oro of the SM group, gets inside their bank.

You see, sitting on the board of Equitable PCI, plus acting as chairs of sensitive committees, are all "FORMER" people of Banco de Oro. They are Tessie Sy, Josefina Tan and Exequiel Villacorta Jr.

Tessie Sy heads Equitable PCIB's powerful executive committee, which reviews everything, while Tan heads the credit committee, which decides on major lendings.

For his part, Villacorta does not stop talking about "merger" and "capital call," as a way to "save" the bank. In effect, he is mouthing the takeover line of the SM group.

Sure, they all claim that they have already given up their positions in Banco de Oro and so, clearly, there is no conflict. Sure, tell that to the marines!

Come on, they still represent the group that owns Banco de Oro that, in turn, wants to take over the Equitable PCIB for a song.

What can stop them from getting the trade secrets of Equitable PCI, or pirating the big clients, or cannibalizing the systems, or even sabotaging its operations? Of course, being decent people, they won't likely do those things.

Still, the danger is always there, not to mention the temptation. And what, my dear SSS and GSIS members, is the Bangko Sentral doing about it? Nothing!

* * *

WHEN the SM group takes over Equitable PCIB, the SSS and GSIS investments in the bank will rot. After the "merger" will come the "capital call," which the pension funds cannot meet, plus other measures to dilute SSS and GSIS.

In effect, the SM group will be taking over the country's third largest bank without spending a single centavo. And this is the group that just withdrew its ads from this newspaper, in effect, using its money to cow new outfits.

What if it succeeds in having its way with Equitable PCIB, or some other big business in the country for that matter, such as San Miguel Corp. or PLDT? Are we going to be at the mercy of the Sy family?

Today, the SM department stores are famous for "contractual" sales girls.

What becomes of the girls after their contracts with SM expire? If you take young women from the provinces, then leave them in the city out in the cold after six months, there is no telling what they will resort to, say, just to send some money home.

If the SM group would not hesitate to use its money to have its way with media, why couldn't Henry Sy just tell his people to use the money to buy the SSS and GSIS out of Equitable PCIB instead?

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CIRCULAR NO. 509
Series of 2006

Subject: **Participation in the Domestic Debt Exchange Offer of the Republic of the Philippines**

The Monetary Board in its Resolution No. 101 dated 26 January 2006 approved the following guidelines on the treatment of securities received pursuant to the Domestic Debt Exchange Offer of the Republic of the Philippines for prudential reporting purposes:

(1) The exchange of securities booked under the Held to Maturity (HTM) category, shall be exempted from the "tainting" provision of Circular No.476 dated 16 February 2005, which prohibits financial institutions from using the HTM category and requires reclassification of the entire HTM portfolio to the Available for Sale (AFS) category during the reporting year and for the succeeding two full financial years whenever a financial institution sells or reclassifies more than an insignificant amount of HTM investments before maturity other than for reasons specified under the said Circular: *Provided*: That the securities rejected shall continue to be booked under the HTM category; and

(2) Securities received in exchange for securities that are eligible reserves for liquidity floor and trust duties shall continue to be recognized as such.

This Circular shall take effect after fifteen (15) calendar days following its publication either in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

For the Monetary Board:

(Sgd.) AMANDO M. TETANGCO, JR.
Governor

01 February 2006

P20B worth of PLDT . . .

From page B1

"The conversion of preferred shares into common equity will dilute PLDT's earnings per share by 4 to 5 percent in 2006 to 2007, especially as the common shares have crossed the P1,700 conversion price," Morgan Stanley said.

The investment house also said that PLDT was beginning to face significant hurdles mainly due to the "changing dynamics of the changing telecommunications market landscape."

"Although fundamentals remain good, we see room for limited positive surprises given slowing mobile [phone] growth, risks to voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) substitution, and reasonable valuations," it said.

A stock market analyst pointed out, however, that Morgan Stanley did not recommend a "sell" on the stock, but merely opined that its upside was limited.

The analyst said the sell-off might have been prompted by profit-taking by holders of the firm's preferred shares, having since converted their holdings into common stock.

"We're talking about an extra 7.9 million shares flooding the market," he said, declining to be named. "That's a significant overhang."

Yesterday's drop in PLDT's price came after three successive days of market declines in the stock that saw the price tumble from its high of P1,895 a share. PLDT's stock price has declined by a cumulative 11.1 percent since then.

It also triggered a sell-off in the PSE with the Phisix dropping 36.46 points or 1.7 percent to 2,060.92 on P1.7 billion worth of transactions.

Of this amount, P778.5 million worth of trades were attributed to the telecommunications giant, representing 45.33 percent of all market activity for the day.

The market was also talking about the feared impact of a new access charge regime proposed by rival Globe Telecom Inc. on PLDT earnings.

Access charges or termination rates are paid by the phone company that makes the call. Since PLDT is the biggest player, bulk of the local traffic ends on its network. In terms of traffic coming from the United States, the Philippines is getting the fourth largest volume.

Locally, about 25 to 35 percent of PLDT's revenues come from calls from other networks. Between 65 and 75 percent in revenues are generated within its pool of more than 20 million mobile subscribers and 2.1 million landline customers.

Second-rank Globe wants to slash access charges or the fees that telcos pay one another to complete calls by 62.5 percent to P1.50 a minute from P4 for domestic calls from landline to mobile and mobile to mobile and by 83 percent to 50 centavos a minute for mobile to landline and between landline phones from the current rate of P3.

Globe also recommended a 75 percent drop in termination fees of overseas calls to landline at 3 US cents a minute from the current 12 cents while fees on overseas calls to mobile phones must also go down by 56.25 percent to 7 US cents a minute from the current 16 US cents.

PLDT had rejected such proposal. Company president Napoleon Nazareno said Globe's proposal "was just a letter."

"Investors should not worry because access rates are determined bilaterally," he said.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Feb. 8, 2006)

Stocks	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35.5	34.5	35.5	543,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58	58.5	57	57.5	1,193,700
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	60.5	60.5	60	60.5	61,300
International Exch. Bank	21.5	21.5	21.5	21.5	10,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32	31	31.5	277,600
Philippine National Bank	31	31	31	31	15,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	10,000
Security Bank Corp.	38	38	38	38	6,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	34	34	33.5	34	80,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3080	3080	3080	3080	60
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	215,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	146	146	146	146	1,810
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2130	2130	2130	2130	260
Ivantage Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	90,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	46	46	43.5	45	810,900
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	149,500
Manila Electric Co. B	20.25	20.25	19.75	20	1,057,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3	4,440,000
Petron Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.35	4.55	10,097,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.21	1,050,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.95	0.94	0.95	160,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	205,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	30,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	22.25	22.25	21.75	21.75	43,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	36.5	35	36.5	431,200
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	80,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	524,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62	62.5	61.5	62.5	67,800
San Miguel Corp. B	84	85	84	84.5	157,500
Vilarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	2,470,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.14	1.18	4,078,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.35	4.25	4.35	1,625,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	40,000
CHEMICALS					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	20,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	8,200,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	24,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	3,000,000
Ayala Corp.	330	330	322.5	325	114,780
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.75	4.85	4.75	4.85	1,227,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	22,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.24	2.24	2.22	2.22	303,000
APC Group Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	400,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.85	0.87	0.85	0.86	870,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.02	1	1.02	11,028,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.05	3.1	2,324,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	50,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.4	1,370,000
Keppel Holdings	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	10,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	700,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	5,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.235	0.225	0.235	1,990,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	2,620,000
SM Investments Corp.	223	223	218	220	199,370
South China Resources Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	50,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	810,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11	11	10.75	10.75	8,478,300
Belle Corp.	1	1	0.99	0.99	3,333,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	1,660,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.52	1.46	1.5	79,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	50,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	20,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	180,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.44	0.45	19,450,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	1,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.4	1.46	3,757,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	1,610,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	100,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.38	1.42	16,297,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.34	7,080,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	870,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.14	0.165	0.14	0.16	128,400,000
SM Development Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	135,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8.1	8	8.1	9,526,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	710,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.5	11.5	10.5	10.75	209,200
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.87	0.87	3,980,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	750	750	745	750	30,640
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.05	3.15	4,137,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1760	1760	1675	1680	460,790
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.165	780,000
Ionics Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	150,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.044	0.044	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.0525	0.0525	7,800,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.027	0.024	0.026	488,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11	11.25	11	11.25	80,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.74	0.78	0.74	0.78	700,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	6,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.64	1.68	979,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.38	0.4	1,810,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.15	3.25	3.15	3.25	175,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	7.3	7.5	7	7.5	963,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.1	1.14	1.1	1.1	797,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.38	1.44	1.38	1.38	103,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	3,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	227,000
Benguet Corp. A	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	30,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.5	1.5	1.48	1.48	62,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.23	0.215	0.22	6,760,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	8,520,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	4,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	34,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	58,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.6	1.64	1.58	1.64	14,733,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2	2	1.9	1.96	7,389,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	27	26.5	27	234,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	1,050,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.34	200,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	26,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.43	0.45	0.43	0.44	160,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.49	1,220,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	4.1	4.15	4.05	4.15	225,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	11	11	10.5	10.5	1,161,700

CURRENCIES

February 8, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.834725	1	51.673
Japan	Yen	0.007072	0.008472	0.4378
United Kingdom	Pound	1.455927	1.7442	90.128
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107578	0.128879	6.6596
Switzerland	Franc	0.643333	0.770713	39.8251
Canada	Dollar	0.723833	0.867152	44.8083
Singapore	Dollar	0.512825	0.614364	31.746
Australia	Dollar	0.619553	0.742225	38.353
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.214358	2.652801	137.0782
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.222575	0.266645	13.7783
Brunei	Dollar	0.511254	0.612482	31.6488
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000109	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021132	0.025316	1.3082
UAE	Dirham	0.227272	0.272272	14.0691
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.198	61.9043
Argentina	Peso	0.27172	0.325521	16.8206
Brazil	Real	0.381675	0.457247	23.6273
Denmark	Kroner	0.133925	0.160442	8.2905
India	Rupee	0.018907	0.02265	1.1704
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.223637	0.267917	13.8441
Mexico	New Peso	0.079162	0.094836	4.9005
New Zealand	Dollar	0.568962	0.681617	35.2212
South Africa	Rand	0.135728	0.162602	8.4021
Korea	Won	0.000862	0.001033	0.0534
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025942	0.031078	1.6059

Peso retreats . . .

From page B1

the Supreme Court suspended the implementation of the expanded value-added tax, the centerpiece of the government's plan to cut the burgeoning fiscal deficit, and because of the political turbulence that threatened President Macapagal-Arroyo's stay in office.

But the government has since attained significant progress in fiscal reforms, keeping the budget deficit below target despite delays in the implementation of the VAT.

Stocks down . . .

From page B1

shares worth P1.7 billion.

Losers led gainers 52 to 22, and 43 stocks were unchanged.

It was the weakest finish in more than three months.

The all-shares index plunged 42.46 points to 951.21, with all sub-indices ending lower.

"The downgrade on PLDT pulled down other stocks as well," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities Inc. *(See story on this Page B1.)*

Dealers said the market had been due for a correction after strong gains in January, that were partly due to an improving outlook on how the government handles its finances. *AFP*

Maynilad posted ₱2.1B in net profit for 2005

By Christine A. Gaylican

WEST CONCESSIONAIRE MAYNILAD WATER Services Inc. (MWSI) posted a net income of P2.1 billion for 2005 due to savings from interest payments and lower production costs.

This was contained in the unaudited financial report submitted by Maynilad for review by the auditing firm Sycip, Gorres and Velayo, said Rosario Bernaldo, the designated rehabilitation court receiver for the Lopez-led utility.

"The company used contractual interest rates that resulted to savings as the rehabilitation plan contained restructured rates that have been approved by the courts," Bernaldo explained.

She added that the better financial performance was also due to the company's effort to improve its service and area development and belt-tightening measures to curb its operating costs.

Bernaldo said the 2005 financial performance of Maynilad bode well for the company's re-privatization. She noted that a rebidding for the west concession area could be held in in May or June this year as the terms of reference were now being drawn up.

This would be the first time in seven years for the west concession to record a profit, Maynilad president Fiorello Estuar said.

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Altis S	100,000	64,468	44,394	35,366	25,237	20,364	17,569
Altis 1.6 E A/T	100,000	63,207	43,527	34,675	24,744	19,966	17,245
Altis 1.6 E M/T	100,000	59,966	41,295	32,899	23,477	18,943	16,361
Altis 1.6 J M/T	100,000	54,835	37,761	30,087	21,470	17,324	14,961
Innova 2.5 G A/T	100,000	85,532	58,900	46,909	33,474	27,010	23,337
Innova 2.0 G A/T	100,000	80,041	55,119	43,900	31,327	25,278	21,838
Innova 2.5 G M/T	100,000	79,681	54,871	43,703	31,186	25,164	21,740
Innova 2.0 G M/T	100,000	75,090	51,709	41,187	29,391	23,715	20,487
Innova 2.5 E M/T	100,000	70,949	48,858	38,917	27,771	22,409	19,358
Innova 2.5 J M/T	100,000	62,937	43,341	34,527	24,638	19,881	17,172
Innova 2.0 J M/T	100,000	58,436	40,241	32,060	22,878	18,460	15,944

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late SOLEDAD DE ASPELLERA, JOSE DELPRADO SR, JESUS DELPRADO has been settled by his heirs through final extrajudicial settlement executed by Leticia S. Mariano de Guia Notary Public of Manila under Doc.# 55, Page #12, Book III Dated Jan 19 2006 Manila IBP 636773 01 02 2006 & Doc# 54 Page# 12 Book# III dated Jan. 19 2006 Manila IBP 636773 01 02 2006 (PDI-Jan. 26, Feb. 2 & 9,2006)

Notice is given that the estate of the late Pleridel Banzon Dizon has been extra-judicially settled among his heirs before Notary Public CONCEPCION M. JUATAS of Parañaque City as per doc. No. 490, Page No 99, Book No. 48 Series of 2006. (PDI Jan. 26, Feb. 2 & 9, 2006)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of Teresita G. Magalona has been extrajudicially settled among her heirs as per Doc. 321, Page No. 66, Book No. 46, Series of 2005 of Notary Public Ruben T.M. Ramirez of Makati City. (PDI-Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 9, 2006)

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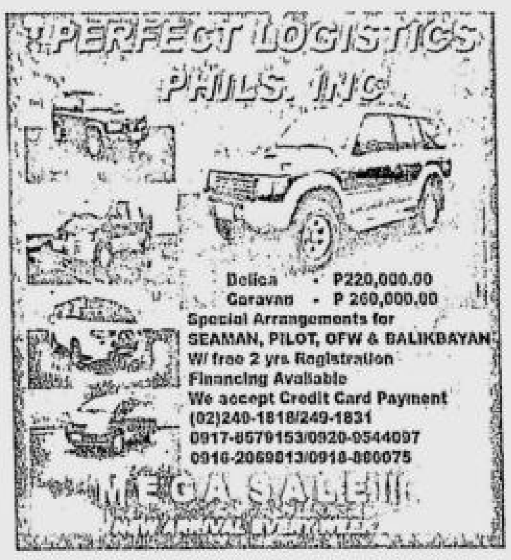

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the MetroBank savings accounts of the late DIVINA B. PERALTA was self-adjudicated to the sole surviving parent/heir MARIO C. PERALTA as per Doc. No. 288, Page 58, Book 1, Series of 2005 and shall be released thru S.P.A. Jesus B. Peralta as per Doc. No. 287, Page 58 of Book 1, series of 2005.
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ERRATUM

In the advertisement of the Department of Agrarian Reform for Community-Managed Agrarian Reform and Poverty Reduction Project (CMARPRP) re: Invitation to Bid published in this paper on February 8, 2006, the following should have read:

A complete set of bidding documents maybe purchase by the interested bidders at the BAC Secretariat Office of the Municipality of Siaton, Province of Negros Oriental, starting February 9, 2006 from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP5,000.00 *for each set . Pre-bid conference will be held in the same address on* February 28, 2006 at 10:00 AM.

The Bid closing date should now be on March 14, 2006, 10 AM instead of March 8 as printed.

Our apologies

OBITUARIES

"Come to Me, all you
who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest."
(Matthew 11:28)

RODOLFO A. TIRONA, JR.

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on February 6, 2006 at the age of 75.

He will be greatly missed and lovingly remembered by his wife **Julie**; children **Ina** and **Grant**, **Rod**, **Triccie**, **Leah** and **Nino** and **Ted**; his grandchildren; his sisters **Fely**, **Dolly** and **Charry**; and all his nephews and nieces.

His body lies in state at the Lumbang Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park), Parañaque City.

Funeral Mass will be on Friday, February 10, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the Lumbang Chapel.

Interment will follow at the Manila Memorial Park immediately after the Mass.

OBITUARIES

ARISTEO "ARIS" T. YCASIANO

(August 12, 1916 - February 6, 2006)

Peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of our Lord with his first wife, Elisabeth Scheerer, on the 6th day of February, 2006 at the age of 89.

He is survived by his wife **Baby**; his sisters, **Mely** and **Ofelia**; his sons, **Francis**, **Robin**, **Dennis**, and **Philip**; and his daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

His family requests the pious reader to join them in prayers and celebration for his eternal happiness and peace by the side of his Creator.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 6 of La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue cor. Kaliyara Street, Quezon City.

Interment is on February 11, 2006 (Saturday) at Himlayang Pilipino at 10:00 a.m.

Our Dearly Beloved Mama

FELY ENCINAS AREVALO

(Formerly Collector of Customs and Sorsogon City Department Head, HRMO) of the Gubat, Sorsogon and Sorsogon City

passed away in the Grace of our Lord on February 5, 2006 at the age of 62.

Her loving husband **Vir**; children: **Marichu** and **Peng**, **Manette** and **Ronald**, **Alain** and **Karen**; grandchildren: **Patrick**, **Alyanna**, **Gabriel**, **Miguel**, **Alexis**, **Arianne**; brothers and sisters; nieces and nephews, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Dr. A. Santos Ave., Parañaque City, Metro Manila.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 11, 2006 at the Golden Haven Memorial Park, Las Piñas City after the celebration of the 1:00 p.m. Holy Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.
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Joined her Creator on February 6, 2006 at the age of 94.

Her memory and legacy will endure in

Her bereaved children **Aldrico** and **Rosita**, **Victor** and **Aurora**, **Anita** and **Antonio**, **Pacita** and **Andres**, **Luis** and **Mildred**, **Gregorio** and **Ming**;

Her grandchildren **Caroline** and **Peter**, **Mylene** and **Benedict**, **Alberto** and **Nancy**, **Aldrico Jr.** and **Jacque**, **Marilyn** and **Ner**, **Robert** and **Joan**, **Richard**, **Roger** and **Jocelyn**, **Ronnie** and **Sheila**, **Arlene** and **Ben**, **Raymond**, **Katheryn** and **Solomon**, **Alfred** and **Kaye**, **Alan**, **Karina**, **Annabelle** and **Oliver**, **Alvin**, **Jocelyn** and **Wilson**, **Jeffrey** and **Aileen**, **Anderson** and **Ginnie**, **Chris**, **Jane**, **KV**, and **Gary**;

Her great-grandchildren, and other relatives and friends; who request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Joces Gonzales Funeral Homes, San Fernando City, La Union.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 11, 2006 at the Lingsat Chinese Cemetery, Brgy. Lingsat, SFLU after the 9:30 a.m. Mass of Resurrection at Saint William the Hermit Cathedral, San Fernando City, La Union.

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On February 4, 2006 at the age of 104.

At the Maryknoll Sisters Center in New York

She had been a Maryknoll Sister for eighty-two years and had been assigned to Maryknoll Schools in Quezon City, Laguna, Baguio and was Principal of St. James Academy, Malabon for many years. Sr. M. Beata Mackie was among the Maryknoll Sisters who were interned at Los Baños during World War II.

$1.4B needed to put up new power plants in Luzon

Additional capacity won't be required until 2010, says DOE

By Abigail L. Ho

SOME $1.4 BILLION IN NEW INvestments should be infused into the Luzon grid by 2010 to prevent a power crisis in the country's biggest power grid, the Department of Energy said.

Refuting the National Economic and Development Authority's claims of a power shortfall in Luzon as early as this year, Energy Undersecretary Melinda Ocampo said the "critical period" for Luzon would not come until 2010.

By that time, she said the grid would need a new peaking plant and a mid-range plant the following year. These would require about $1.4 billion in new investments.

Potential capacity additions by 2010 are expected to come from the following: the 40-megawatt (MW) Tarlac Bionergy project in 2008, the 40-MW North Luzon Phase II Wind Project in 2009, the 1,000-1,500-MW Bataan liquefied natural gas plant in 2011 or 2012, and the 600-MW Bataan Greenfield plant between 2010 and 2012.

Other projects are the 500-MW Limay plant conversion in 2010, the 600-MW Ilijan gas-fired power plant expansion in 2009, the 550-MW San Gabriel power plant in 2009, the 350-Pagbilao Coal III in 2010, the 40-MW Manito-Kayabong geothermal project in 2010, the 40-MW Tanawon project in 2009, the 600-MW Malaya plant conversion in 2012, and the 450-850-MW Sucat plant conversion in 2012.

According to data from the DOE, the Luzon grid currently has an installed generating capacity of 12,076 MW, with dependable capacity of 10,395 MW.

Ocampo said that with this dependable capacity and a projected peak demand of only 6,479 MW this year, the earliest that the Luzon grid would need new capacity would be at the end of 2010. The grid has an average gross reserve margin of about 3,900 MW.

The DOE expects demand in Luzon to grow by 4.3 percent a year.

The installation of new capacity could be deferred if consumers would respond favorably to the government's efforts to promote demand management.

The National Power Corp. said the power supply situation in the country remained stable, and there was no need to panic amid speculations of a power crisis.

Napocor president Cyril del Callar said the country's power supply was enough to support the projected economic growth of 5.7 percent.

Globe spending $100M to start 3G operations

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE TELECOM INC. YESTERday said it would initially spend about $100 million to roll out its third-generation or 3G mobile services, which would be made available to subscribers within the first quarter.

"Incumbent players like us can roll out fairly quick given our existing infrastructure," said Globe president Gerardo Ablaza.

He said the $100 million was the amount the company quoted in its application for incentives with the Board of Investments.

The partnership of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom is also expanding ties with telcos in the region to bring down the cost of mobile services for Filipinos here and abroad. Local rates are applied to calls between Globe and Singtel subscribers.

Ablaza said the company would hold talks with Malaysia's Maxis, Hong Kong's CSL and Taiwan Mobile—all 3G operators now—for an arrangement that would allow Globe to use the networks of these regional players.

There are more than 130,000 Filipinos in Singapore; almost 200,000 in Hong Kong; more than 160,000 in Taiwan, and more than 350,000 in Malaysia.

Ablaza said the volume of calls and text messages between Globe and Singtel had more than doubled since the pricing scheme was launched last year.

"We think we can do the same thing with other countries where there are many overseas Filipino workers," said the Globe chief.

Globe will prioritize tie-ups with other members of the Bridge Mobile Alliance, which it co-founded in November 2004.

GOINGS-ON

CebuPac's on-line booking

CEBU PACIFIC AIR has re-launched its website with real time booking capability to make booking more flexible and convenient.

The airline's improved website (www.cebupacificair.com) allows passengers to book their flights as late as three hours before departure time and to pay and get their e-tickets on-line.

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GLOBALLAW, a knowledge-based legal outsourcing company, has opened a unit in Manila.

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Ecozones in Mindanao

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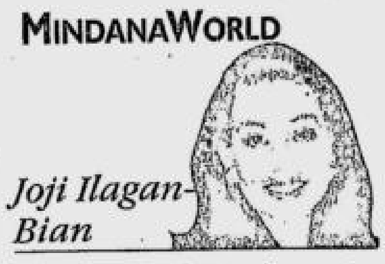


Joji Ilagan-Bian

DECADES AGO, THE LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE facilities was a major problem that discouraged investors from doing business in Mindanao. The costs of transportation and communication were too high.

Infrastructure in place

That problem is not exactly a thing of the past, as there are still a lot more to be done. However, the situation now is a lot better than what it was. Road networks, airports, seaports, telecommunications and other facilities are now in place. These improvements did not only cut the cost of doing business in Mindanao, but also made it more convenient and profitable.

Getting more investments has always been a tough challenge for the government and the private sector. Even if the required facilities were in place, they have to contend with the "image problem" of Mindanao, particularly with regard to the peace and order situation. But these constraints are being addressed through appropriate investment promotion and acquisition strategies.

The strategies in promoting Mindanao as an investment destination are consistent with the overall investment promotion program of the country. One of these is the creation of economic zones.

As defined in Republic Act No. 7916, or the The Special Economic Zone Act of 1995, ecozones are selected areas with highly developed or which have the potential to be developed into agro-industrial, industrial-tourist/recreational, commercial, banking, investment and financial centers.

An ecozone may contain any or all of the following: Industrial estates, export processing zones, free trade zones, and tourist/recreational centers.

The law states that "the government shall actively encourage, promote, induce and accelerate a sound and balanced industrial, economic and social development of the country in order to provide jobs to the people especially those in the rural areas, increase their productivity and their individual and family income, and thereby improve the level and quality of their living condition through the establishment of special economic zones in suitable and strategic locations in the country."

Among the privileges granted to ecozone locators under RA 7916 is exemption from national and local taxes.

Mindanao ecozones

There are 21 ecozones in Mindanao that were registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza).

In Western Mindanao, the 50-hectare Ayala de Zamboanga Industrial Park in Zamboanga City is ready for locators, preferably light to medium scale, non-pollutive industries.

In Northern Mindanao, the Misamis Oriental Ecozone in Jasaan prefers oleochemical industries. The Pueblo de Oro IT Park in Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City, prefers IT-related industries.

Development is still underway at the First Cagayan de Oro Business Park in San Martin, Villanueva, Misamis Oriental.

The 61-hectare Sarangani Economic Development Zone in Polomolok, South Cotabato, prefers food and vegetable processing, meat processing, quick frozen products, and corn and flour milling.

In Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City, the 19-hectare SRC Calumpang Economic Development Zone is also ready for locators.

Development is underway in five other ecozones in the region: Apo Estates Special Economic Zone in Barangay Madaum, Tagum City; Filinvest Technology Park General Santos in Tambler, General Santos City; General Santos Special Economic Zone, also in Tambler, General Santos City; Sarangani Economic Development Zone in Matinao, Polomolok, South Cotabato, and Tiger Valley Industrial Estate in Klinan 6, Polomolok, South Cotabato.

Three ecozones are being built in Iligan City of Central Mindanao. These are the CIIP Agro-Industrial Park, Global Ispat Industrial Park, and NSC Special Economic Zone.

In the Caraga Region, the Philnico Industrial Estate in Nonoc Island, Surigao del Norte, is ready for locators, preferably nickel refinery operations, service and utility providers, support industries to nickel refinery and downstream industries.

The Shannalyne Technological & Environmental Park in Milagros, Esperanza, Agusan del Sur is ready for investors in pulp, paper and other wood-based industries.

In Tubay, Agusan del Norter, the Tubay Agro-Processing Center is also ready for locators.

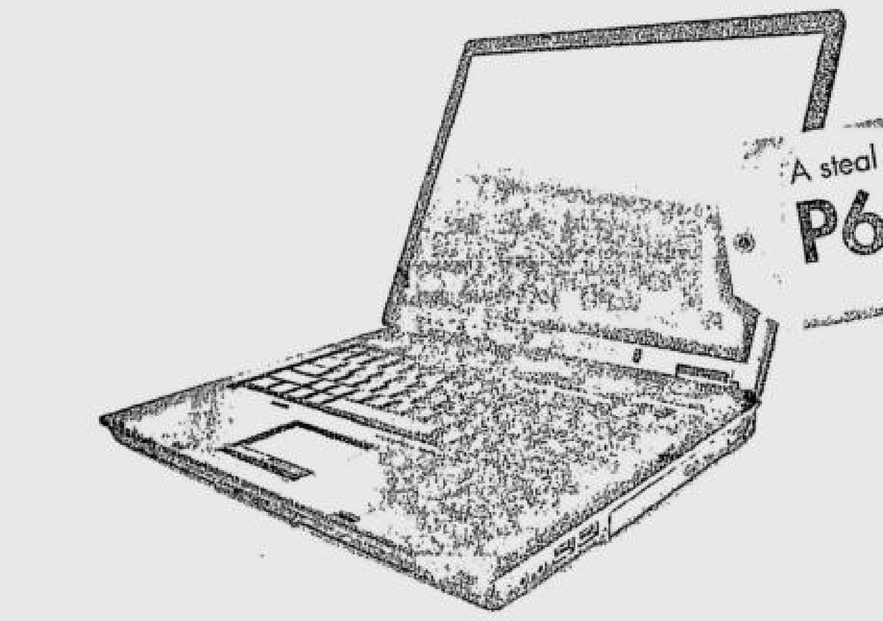
In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the Maguindanao Ecocity is being developed in Parang, Maguindanao.

Invest in Mindanao

This means Mindanao has ready-to-occupy locations for investors who want to do business in the country's second largest island.

These ecozones make doing business in Mindanao very convenient. They also offer opportunity for investors to be part of the peace and development efforts for the island and the country, in general.

(Joji Ilagan Bian is an advocate for Mindanao; vice chair of the Mindanao Commission of Women and National Corn Board; chair of the Mindanao TVET; Mindanao representative, Export Development Council, and chair, Joji Ilagan Foundation. E-mail comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)



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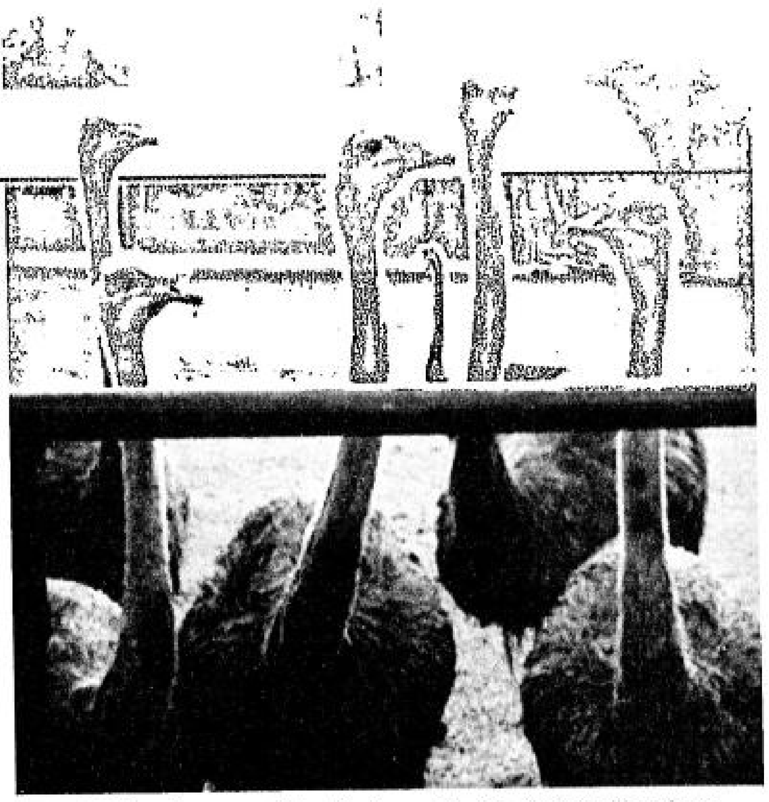
Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

LIFESTYLE

WEDNESDAY **2BU** THURSDAY **FOOD** FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

A love affair with ostrich


OSTRICH to the rescue! The "red meat" of the third millennium

How ostrich compares with other meats

Type	Calories	Protein %	Fat Gr.	Cholesterol Mg	Iron Mg
Ostrich	142	26.9	3	83	3.2
Beef (lean steak)	211	29.9	9.3	86	3
Chicken (flesh)	190	28.9	7.4	89	1.2
Pork (lean)	212	29.3	9.7	86	1.1
Turkey (flesh)	170	29.3	5	76	1.8

ONCE AGAIN, IT'S VALENTINE'S DAY AND, through Kitchen Rescue, people have asked me how to keep the heart healthy.

The answers are quite simple. Much as you can, stay away from stress; exercise; heed your mother's advice on who to date or marry; and eat ostrich!

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Let's not discuss our mother's choices, but the mighty big bird that has much to offer. Ostrich is considered the new "red meat" of the third millennium.

Contrary to perception, they are clean, fed only with grains, poultry pellets and grass. It tastes wonderful, and takes easily to the flavor of the ingredients used in a dish. Truth is, it tastes like beef yet with 2/3 less fat. It is low on cholesterol and calories. (See chart.) If the cuts are cooked right, the fillets melt in your mouth while the stew cuts are only comparable to the much-loved yet less healthy shank! Yes, it is too good to be true!

I put my love for ostrich meat aside for a time when the supply was erratic and the birds I got had been frozen since Valentine 2004 and were a tad expensive.

Second chance

Recently, I decided to give my love affair with it a second chance. I called Olive Puentespina in Davao to order. Thing is, you can specify how old you want the bird to be and it is slaughtered only upon your order! The meat is then flown in to Manila, ready for pickup, at even cheaper prices than those sold bone-frozen! So it was a love affair that did not take much effort to rekindle!

I got my fillets and did a class for those contemplating on a lifestyle change, without giving up meat. (Fillets are upper thigh and back—top loin, inside strip, outside strip, tenderloin—the most tender parts. The general rule is, the closer to the bone, the more tender the cut. Stew cuts are from the running muscles; unlike other poultry, ostrich meat does not come in breast cuts.)

I did everything conceivable to the meat, both at home and at work—roasted with Kona Coffee Crust, turned to "gelatinous" stews of Bourguignon, Adobo and Rendang, pan-fried with onion jam and grilled, as I would any kind of steak. Everyone loved it! The trick was not to tell those with food biases that it was ostrich. Even my little Diego eats it with great gusto!

The ranch

According to Olive, the ostrich ranch came to be once upon a time in 1999.

"Wanting to add to the attractions at Malagos Garden Resort (the first property in the Philippines for wildlife and habitat management, waste management and outreach education by Audobon International and rated 39th in the world), we thought of putting up a bird park. That my husband, Dr. Bo, is a vet and I, an animal nutritionist, seemed good enough reason to try.

"With imported pheasants and waterfowl, we started our little breeding and display area. Then we got a trio of the biggest bird in the world, the ostrich (one male and two females) to add to our growing number of pets. We named them Rock, Trixi and Ossie.

"After two years, we had our first egg, which hatched after 42 days. We named him Primo. Lots of eggs followed and before we knew it, we had Segundo, Tersio, Quatro, Sinco... [until] We ran out of names. On the first breeding year, we had about 30 chicks. The next year we had about a hundred chicks! The third year we were forced to cook the first month's breed... wonderful for omelets."

"Aside from meat, we sell live ostrich to zoos, private collectors and those who want to start an ostrich ranch. We teach and transfer technology to help get the farm going. There are years that males get left behind in favor of likely-to-lay females. So we fatten the males to about 120-150 kilos and slaughter them for meat at about 10-12 months. I find that, at this age, the bird gives the best yield. The tender cuts are vacuum-packed for restaurants, the not-so-tender ones get to be cut into medallions for marinating, and the toughest parts, ground. The stewing cuts are made into a mean *caldereta* and the unappealing small muscle group, cooked to a tender *salpicado* by my daughter, Ingrid."

"Nothing goes to waste. Feathers are turned into dream-catchers, fans and masquerade masks; bones, into skeleton displays; fat, into special soap combined with our goats' milk. The skin sent to the tannery and turned into leather. The nails become paper weights and the empty eggshells become lamps."

Olive ends by encouraging those with idle land to raise these awesome birds. "On the third year, if you raise cows, they give you just a calf, while ostriches give 30 chicks!"

Economics-wise, it is a much better proposition!

Contact Olive Puentespina at 0917-7001205. Next week, easy and delicious ostrich recipes!

Until then, keep the heart healthy and Happy Valentine's Day!

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

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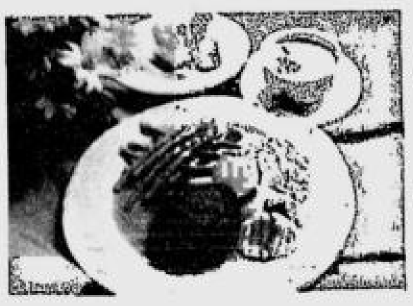
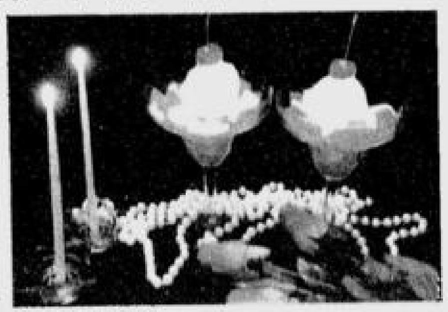
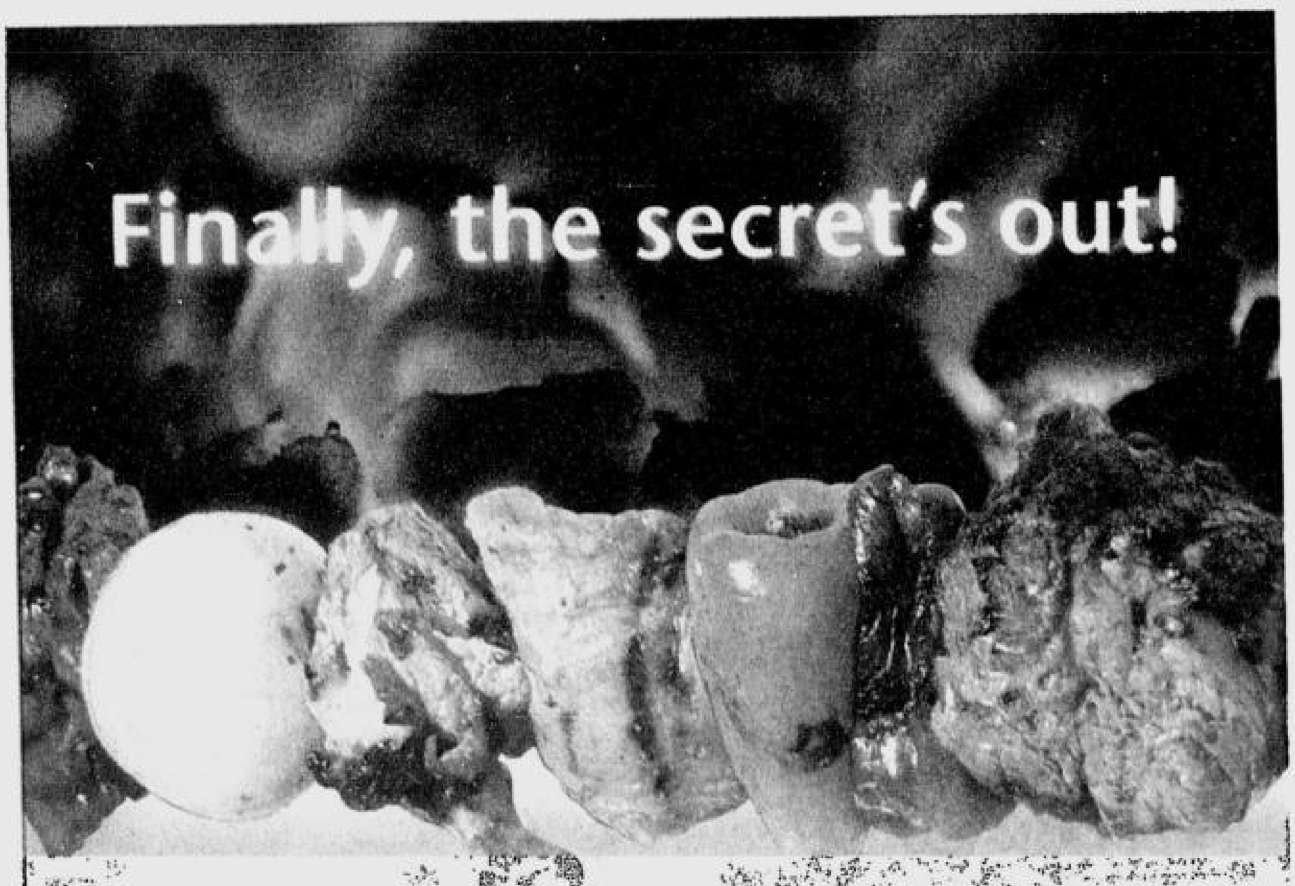
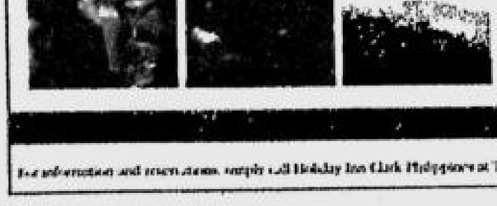
Sweethearts deals

HOTEL/RESTAURANT	DINNER/LUNCH	ROMANTIC FREEBIES	COST	ROOM PACKAGES	COST
ASTORIA PLAZA 15 J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas, Business District, Pasig City (tel. 6871111)	Set dinner with special 5-course menu Feb. 14 only	A complimentary bottle of wine, pralines, roses for the ladies; lucky diners can win a pearl pendant from Jewelmer	P750++ per person	Intimate Suite Room promo	P5,900 net
MANILA DIAMOND HOTEL (tel. 5283000)		Package comes with sparkling wine and truffles with breakfast for two at the hotel's Palm Court Café		Overnight accommodation In the hotel's Superior Room	P5,100++
				For two nights	P8,500++
		with fruit basket Free access to hotel's health spa		Overnight in an Executive Suite For two nights	P8,100++ P15,000++
TRADERS HOTEL (tel. 5279126)	Four-course menu	Glass of red/white wine and a love potion for the lady.	P1,998++		
RICHMONDE HOTEL (tel. 6387777 local 3401)	Dinner at the Grill	Divine pralines for ladies as token	P900++ per person	Special room packages with your choice of buffet breakfast at the Grill or set breakfast room service	P3,400++ to P4,200++
		15 percent discount at the Grill except happy hour 20 percent discount on services at Head Zone Salon 10 percent discount on room massage services plus complimentary use of Health Club facilities a bottle of red wine a chocolate cake for two and a stuffed toy souvenir			
MANILA PAVILION HOTEL (tel. 5261212 local 2305)	A Victorian Valentine meal at the Rotisserie	Pralines	P1,750++per person		
	Buffet at Café Coquilla	With free rose for ladies			
SEVEN SUITES Hotel Observatory (tel. 6820330/6822076)	Special Valentine set menu	With a glass of red or white wine, brewed coffee or tea With complimentary breakfast		Special room package	
CENTURY PARK HOTEL (tel. 5288888)	Lunch or dinner buffet at Café at the Park		P895++ for adult P500++ for children 4-12 years old		
	Unsui Japanese buffet		P980++ for adult P475++ for children		
	Three-course menu at Atrium Lounge	Free rose for the ladies a complimentary Bailey's			
		A bottle of bubbly, chocolates and rose for ladies		Overnight accommodation with a three-course dinner	P2,300 net
SULO HOTEL (tel. 9245051 to 71)	Valentine special set dinner				
HOTEL PHILIPPINE PLAZA (tel. 5515555)	Café Plaza Too's Valentine's buffet featuring an array of salads, seafoods, cold appetizers, among others			Suite Romance of the Spa (for couple) Five-hour spa service inclusive of a 45-minute Suite Romance Passion	for P12,000++
	Café Plaza Too's Aphrodisiac set menu	Inclusive of home dark and white chocolate pralines as token	P2,500++		

HOTEL/RESTAURANT	DINNER/LUNCH	ROMANTIC FR
TOWER CLUB (tel. 8857085)	Continental Restaurant offers a special love menu (six-course dinner) inclusive of a glass of Moet & Chandon champagne per person	Roses for ladies and heart-shaped three-la and white) pralines m. gian chocolate
MAKATI SHANGRI-LA HOTEL (tel. 8138888 local 7588)	Makati Shangri-La's Red offers special set menu for two: appetizers, main entrees of meat or seafood plus dessert	
KIMPURA JAPANESE RESTAURANT (tel. 7218816)		Sweet Something for Mode desserts for eve minimum food purcha
JADE GARDEN (tel. 8922336, 8124548)	Lunch for four Includes an appetizer of roasted meat (two) combination, choice of one soup, choice of three main dishes, plus a choice of Yeung Chow Fried Rice or Fried Noodles with assorted meat, plus dessert	
CHINESE MONK (tel. 8974129/3785)	Valentine's Day's sweet, hot and spicy dishes	Diners will get a comp pork *siomai* for every food purchase; red ro diners
TWIST (tel. 4211822/23)	Special Set Menu for couples Mejillones and Ostras con Espinacas, their choice of Caesar Salad or Minestrone Soup, Paella Española, Roast Beef and chocolate cake	
BURGOO (tel. 9277424, 6875254, 8981815, 7263578 and 9136112)	Ultimate Steak and Seafood Combo	Diners will have a co glass of red or white v plus red roses for the with every order of th
RED CRAB (tel. 4009980, 3748406)	Valentine Seafood Lovers Delight	
THE BELLEVUE HOTEL (tel 7718181)	Pre- Valentine set dinner; Valentine buffet lunch and dinner	





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'Tis the time of the year that hotels and restaurants look forward to because on Valentine's Day, passion starts with flavors and spices. To help you whip up romance with ease, here is a list of what these kitchens are offering lovers out there. Oh, and we've included special room packages because you never know where wine and roses may lead

PROMO PERIOD

Feb. 10-14

whole month of February

Feb. 14

Feb. 11-18

Feb. 13-15

Feb. 14

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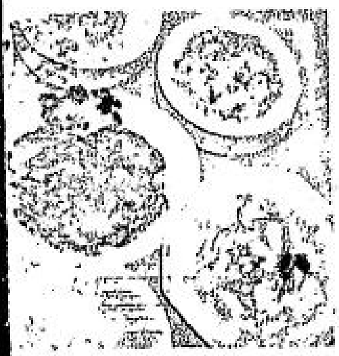

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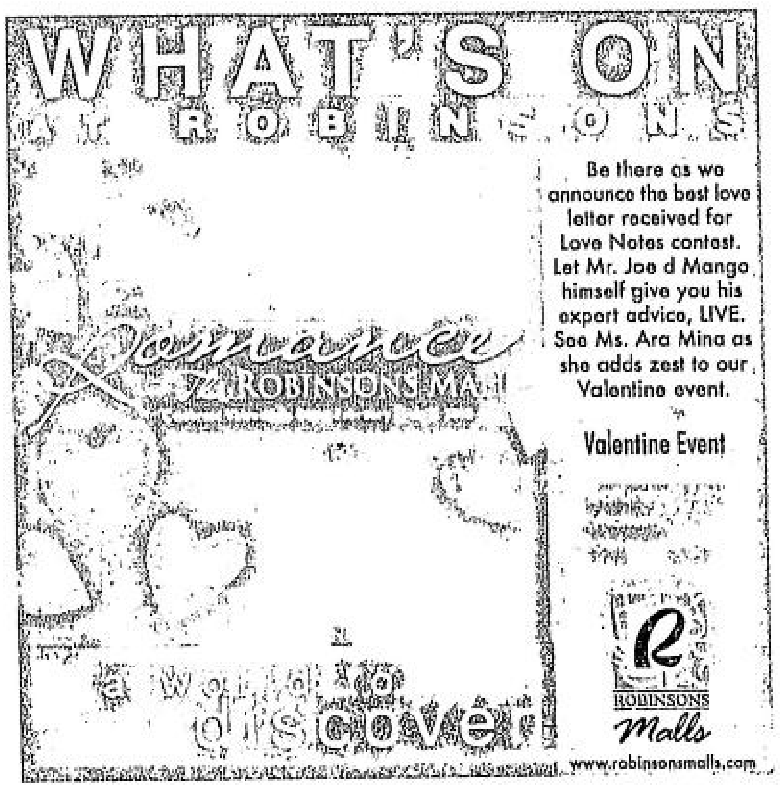
P1,150++per person



WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

Be there as we announce the best love letter received for Love Notes contest. Let Mr. Joe d Mango himself give you his expert advice, LIVE. See Ms. Ara Mina as she adds zest to our Valentine event.

Valentine Event

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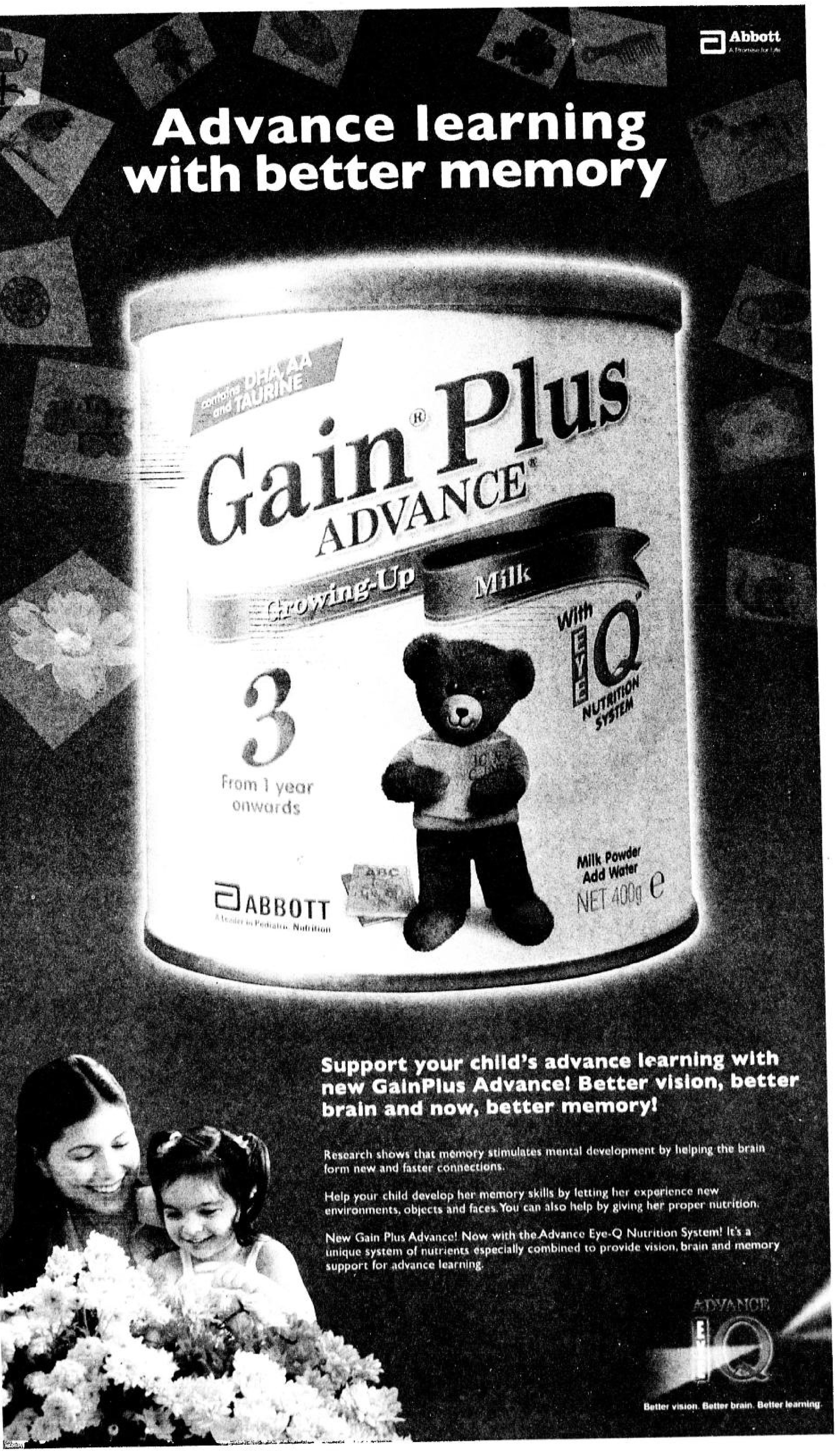

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A guided tour of a food fair

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

FOR BREAKFAST, IT'S MY second son who usually decides what we are going to have. He scrounges through the pantry and makes his choice then instructs the cook.

One morning, he excitedly told me we would be having beer ham. On the platter were small round pieces, more sausage- than ham-shaped. Since ham was sometimes boiled with beer, the name wasn't surprising. What amused me was that the beer ham was from his adventure of the day before.

The adventure turned out to be a walk through the Food Fair at Megamall in Mandaluyong a week ago. He and his friends, who meet at the mall every Saturday, decided to find out what the fair was all about.

He happily reported that they didn't need to eat dinner at their usual fast-food haunts. They ate through all the booths, trying the "free taste" pieces—crispy *tahong*, a myriad of pasta sauces, and the hams, of course.

He loved the chocolate drink so he bought one cylinder of *tablea*. I reminded him that his grandmother's *tablea* in Leyte was better because it was made of pure cacao. He knew that but enjoyed the idea of buying his own chocolate.

And he reveled at the thought that he was first at the fair, a place he knew I would go to as part of my work.

Hurried tour

So this son served as my guide the next day, a short, hurried tour because we had to be on time for Sunday lunch with the family.

At food fairs, many unconsciously look for new products, a different take on the usual. I've had friends who complained that these were no longer worth going to because there was nothing new.

But I do learn new things, not necessarily products, but new approaches, as well as new marketing strategies. Those are all valuable lessons.

Take this booth Chanos Chanos. I told my son it was the scientific name of the *bangus*. On top of the table were pots of bread spreads. One was *tinapang bangus* processed with cream cheese, another with liver to become pâté and the last one advertised its *sisig* flavor. Oh yes, they do have the normal *bangus* products such as frozen *daing*.

The man behind the counter (the owner who didn't have his name on the card) said *bangus* prices were too unstable, that if there was no "value-added" effort, their fishpond business in San Juan, Batangas, wouldn't even pay for the feeds.

A little help

How did they develop those bread spreads? With the help of the Bureau of Food and Drug, he said. Now, he claimed, it's the government that takes lessons from his group.

The government, particularly the Department of Agriculture, had the biggest booth there. I suppose it was an occasion to showcase what the department had been doing to help the food industry.

I asked one of those manning the place what help exactly was extended. She groped for answers. I decided to help her. Packaging? Yes, she said. Product development? Yes, she said. I stopped the interview and just bought the *pili* products from Bicol—tarts and *mazapan*.

On the Go Ventures is the company that makes the beer ham. They had sausages, *embotido* of pork and chicken and *bangus relleno*. No preservatives, they claimed. All meat or, in the case of the *bangus relleno*, no vegetables, pure fish. Now that's the way to sell. But why was it that the product tasted better there than it did at home?

Instant lectures

Now and then, when you asked about a product, you got a lecture. As soon as we stopped to survey the brown rice, the seller cited how the healthy bran was still there and how the rice was organically grown. The spiel was so inspiring it made you guilty not to buy even if lugging around two kilos was such a mean feat.

ECJ FARMS SINAMAK
SINAMAK

SINAMAK from Bacolod, all dressed up

Others liked to dress up their product. A bottle of *sinamak* from Bacolod had on a hat and a kerchief. The vinegar mix that incorporated chili and *langkawas* (*galangal*) didn't need the gimmick but it did make a grand gift idea.

Equipment demonstrations were going on in many booths. A rather advanced packaging machine was spitting out *tetrapak* boxes almost every second. The plastic cover of a cheaper version of the food processor was thrown some feet away to show its durability. The noise produced by the plastic cover bouncing off the cement floor was duplicated elsewhere, this time even louder as the vendor banged on the steel stove he was selling.

Some nongovernment organizations were helping the food-processing industry to produce and market products. Tatak Bulacan displayed the province's best, most of which I had the good fortune of tasting on site—*chicharon* and *minasa* (cassava cookies) of *poblacion* Bustos.

More fairs

Months from now, there will be other fairs highlighting food as well as other products of a locality, province or region. It's an occasion to taste specialties not always available in Metro Manila. Those who miss the food of their hometowns as well as those who have happily discovered how much goodness is out there will be grateful for the opportunity.

Every food fair also has cooking demonstrations. I am hoping that some traditional cooking can be part of the program. We'd really love to see how the *pinikpikan* of the Cordilleras is done, that soup dish of chicken killed slowly. Or how *kesong puti*, our own cheese from carabao's milk, is made. Or how to do the colorful *kiping*, leaf-shaped rice crackers that are also used as décor in the Pahiyas Festival of Lucban, Quezon.

PAMPANGA tablea, ensaymada and ube halaya of Lola P.

My son, my guide, went through each booth, tasted everything, commented on this and that, asked for brochures and even inquired if their products were being sold at groceries.

I wish I could claim he had been well-trained, but I can't. He's just interested because he loves to eat.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

Dealing with bad customer relations

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

CONSUMERS WITH COMplaints about warranties and purchases that turn out to be lemons can seek redress with the Department of Trade and Industry.

But where do they go for complaints not covered by the Consumer Protection Act such as customer abuse, sex discrimination, accidents due to recklessness by establishments, and so on?

Take the following experiences:

JP Medina said he was turned away from a popular restaurant in Greenbelt all because he was gay. In his e-mail, he explained that he was looking for a table when a waiter approached him and said all tables were taken. He looked around and saw several vacant tables. Then and there, he felt something was wrong.

When he raised his voice, pointing out the vacant tables, the waiter blurted out, "*Mahigpit pong pinag-uutos ng may-ari na hindi daw po kami tatanggap ng* gay customers!"

Cai Baltazar of Salcedo Place, Makati, wanted to know when calling someone "*manong*" became insulting as he related his "unbelievable experience."

In a Greenbelt restaurant, he asked a waiter, "*Manong, ano ho ba ang* ok *dito*?" To his surprise, the waiter gave him dagger looks and rudely snapped back, "Don't call me '*manong*!' *Hindi ako 'manong!' May pangalan ako! Ayan o*!"

Even after he complained to the manager, Baltazar said the waiter continued his tirade, saying, "*Tinatawag mo akong manong e mas mukha ka namang matanda sa akin.*"

The waiter was suspended by management but Baltazar felt he should not be allowed to return to his job. The customer still could not understand why the waiter took offense to being called *manong*, a term of respect among Visayans.

Mariselle E. Malicsi-Garcia, a technical support representative of eTelecare Global Solutions, had a different experience. She slipped and fell on pieces of broken glass on the wet floor in a section of Gateway Mall. Lucky for her, an attentive guard named Henry Tuazon promptly accompanied her to a clinic for first-aid treatment. After that, she was transported to World City Hospital by a mobile service vehicle provided by the Araneta Center police force.

Garcia commented: "I appreciate that the establishment paid the hospital bill but I still [want] to raise the following points and issues: first, why didn't the maintenance staff clean up the broken pieces right away or put a warning sign around the mess. Why was there no first-aid clinic [inside] the building?"

The next story is sheer proof that some establishments have no concern for child comfort and safety.

Imma Fermin Otengco wrote about the accident that happened to her 2-year-old daughter at a high-end shop for apparel and accessories in Makati.

Her daughter, she said, was romping around the shop when she fell and hit her chin on the sharp edge of a display rack. The 2.5-cm laceration on the chin required surgery at the Cardinal Santos Medical Center.

The following day, she called the store and reported the details of the accident. But, instead of comforting words, the manager was indifferent and did not even bother to apologize.

Otengco wrote, "We expected proper decorum, at the very least, from the manager of one of the 'prominent' shops in the country. We decided to write to the owner of the shop. After four weeks, he replied telling us we were solely responsible, etc., etc. The letter was written on [what appeared like] scratch paper, with writing at the back, and placed in an envelope one can buy in a nearby *sari-sari* store... To add insult to injury, this man sent me a shirt, a plain shirt I would not think of buying even if it were on sale. I returned it."

Consumer's suggestion

Some weeks ago, reader Alrey Galang (thinksolutions@gmail.com) sent us his suggestion on what consumers should do when their rights are violated.

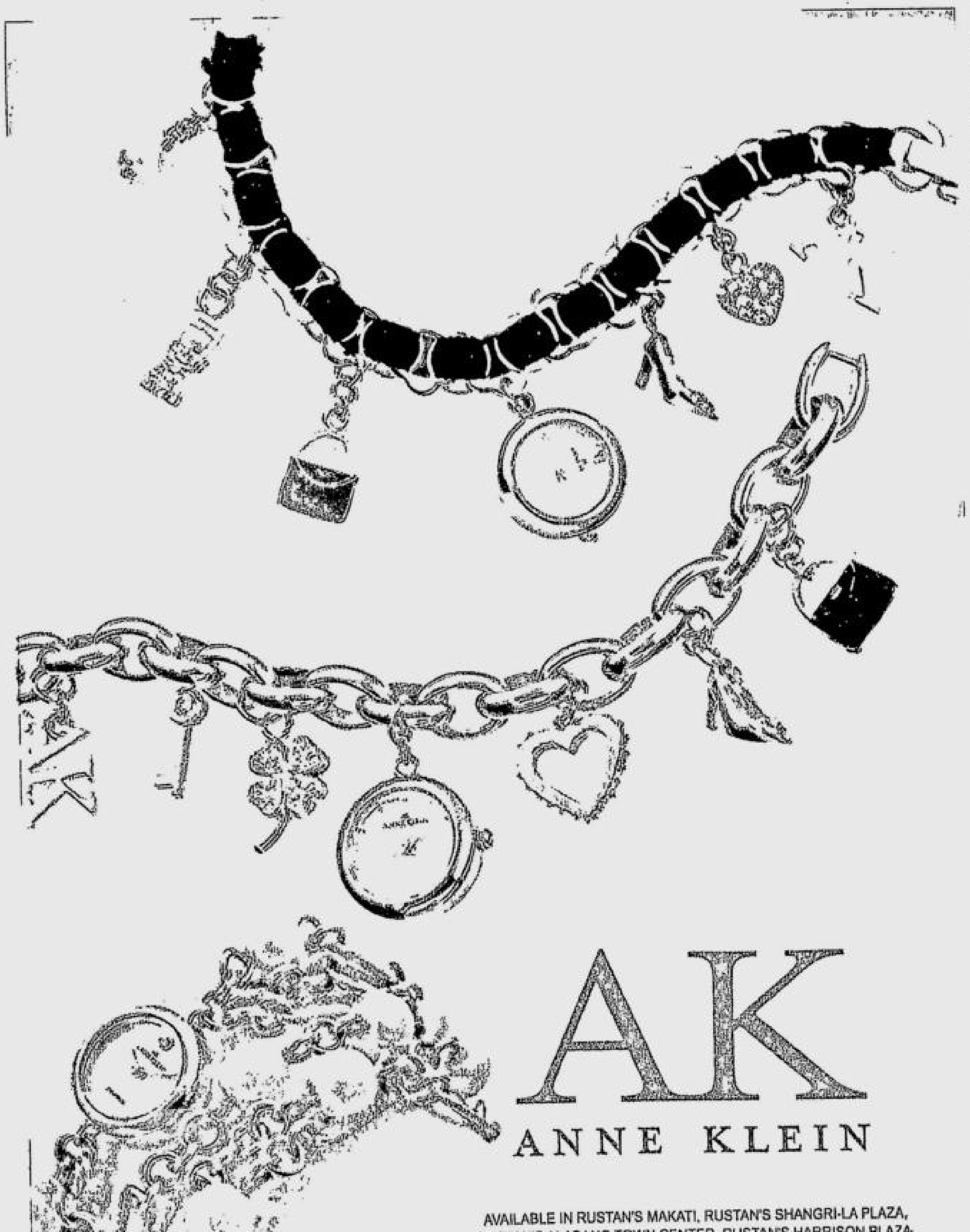
"I will call the attention of the store management when I feel that my right as a consumer is abused. Examples are cashiers who do not issue receipts, slow service, untidy toilets, wet floor, a food attendant looking out of the window.

"In cases that are not resolved at management level, I will send a letter to the consumer desk of the Department of Trade and Industry, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, or another agency.

"I guess there also has to be some kind of a movement on consumer rights protection to call the attention of business establishment owners about good service. This means the proper training of employees on how to please customers, among others."

Please resend

Our computer crashed again! We request consumers to resend e-mail messages these past two months to mvgiron07@yahoo.com or to mariettagiron@hotmail.com



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